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Cuba

Castro Comments on Role of ANPP, Elections

FL1202223893 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 12 Feb 93

[Interview with President Fidel Castro by unidentified reporters at the government building in Santiago de Cuba on 11 February—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] The people of Santiago de Cuba have been thinking about the 40th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada Barracks. Perhaps I am getting too far ahead, but I would like to know what you think about the work that all Santiago de Cuba residents are doing, especially your opinion [words indistinct].

[Castro] [Words indistinct] and not about 26 July. We must focus on 24 February, but the 24 February victory will bring glory to 26 July.

[Reporter] That is why I would like to take advantage of this subject, now that you have brought it up. You talked about procedural issues. Now I would like you to explain something about concepts. Do you think the improvement of the electoral process necessarily means an improvement in our National Assembly [ANPP] and our provincial assemblies?

[Castro] Of course, without a doubt, because they will have much more direct contact with the people and because they will have more authority. Direct election of the deputies and delegates by the people will give them more authority than indirect election by the municipal assembly delegates.

They have lived through a unique experience, which commits them a lot more. All their visits, contacts, and meetings make them better informed. Of course, the delegates must be delegates in two senses of the word. They must represent those who voted for them, and they must represent the country, because we are not a federation of municipal representatives. It is very important to understand this double role of the delegates. But I think it will make the people think more at length about the problems in different parts of the country. They will understand the country's reality better, and they will be invested with greater authority.

I think the selection process will also result in high quality, quality that must be higher every year, because every year our country has more knowledge. There are more skilled, capable, brilliant people, and the ANPP should become....[pauses] It is not just for brilliant people, because a person who is outstanding at the base level, as a magnificent district delegate or as the president of a people's council, is worthy of being in the ANPP, and that helps a lot.

The ANPP cannot be an assembly of intellectuals alone, or philosophers, or lawyers who make laws. It must be representative of the country. But for each of the areas it represents, it must represent the country's best. Of course, it will always be difficult to say it represents the best, because there are a lot of people who are the best. When there are so many to choose from, it is very difficult to use the word "best." It is enough to say the effort has been made to choose the most representative, the most skilled and capable; in short, the effort has been made. This does not mean that if you are choosing between 40,000 and 50,000, there are not thousands of people with the same qualifications as the others, but who still have to improve, find themselves, and develop a little more.

We must also improve our selection methods. The methods of the candidacy commissions must be improved, because this is the first time we have walked along this road. We have accumulated some very valuable experience.

[Reporter] You are thinking about future elections.

[Castro] I am thinking about future elections, with even more consultations.

[Reporter] Could (your democracy) become even more democratic?

[Castro] I think everything can always be improved, but we are getting as close as possible. For now, I think we have what no one else has. I felt it yesterday when I was speaking with the people, especially because of an idea which many of them understood. Who has been nominated as deputy? Who can be a deputy in this country? They are not the millionaires [words indistinct] the famous lawyer, the senior partner who defends the firm's interests.

Just the idea that any man or woman [words indistinct] in this country, if they meet the requirements, can be in the ANPP is something you will not find anywhere else, or only as an exception. A brilliant person can make it as an exception, and who knows how many concessions he had to make along the way to get there. They are the exception, but here they are the rule. They make it without anyone's patronage, influence, or money. When a country achieves this, when the top state leadership organizations—and in this case the provincial organizations as well—are made up of people of that quality and from those origins, it is an accomplishment that other countries do not have.

When you stop to think that almost half of our ANPP is base-level delegates, this is something that no other country has. Because in what country do the town counselors reach the legislature? Who knows better than a town counselor about the problems that exist at his level? Where does the mayor of a small village reach the legislature? Where does the president of a people's council reach the legislature? These are local leaders, and local leaders do not reach the legislature. To be in the legislature, everyone must be national-level leader. Besides being a national-level leader....[pauses] To be a national-level leader one must be rich, belong to the

ruling class, the wealthy class, the influential class. One must have a machine and everything.

You can see that the leftist political parties are generally isolated, alone, and without resources, without money for propaganda or anything. They get one, two, or three deputies elected, but the others, who have the money for propaganda and every possible resource....[pauses] It has become a science of selling the candidate, the same as selling Coca-Cola and cigarettes. Not having to suffer from any of these terrible vices already puts us above all the other countries, as a democratic country.

I would say that these people, the base-level people, that they can be elected is one of the best things. You can see that the number of national figures here is approximately 100, or 100 something. They are approximately 20 percent of the ANPP. Because we have here....[pauses] I think that [scientist Carlos] Cabal was nominated as a national figure, right? As a deputy. That means they come from three sectors: the base level, the provincial level, and the national level. But there are many who have come from the national level who are not national figures but national talents, which is not the same. Many of these talented people are not well known.

[Reporter] (?We have a deputy from the scientific hub.)

[Castro] Yes, I think for Guama.

[Reporter] Yes, for Guama.

[Castro] I was told that this morning. Therefore, there are very few national figures that are among the 589 deputies. There are 274 base-level deputies, approximately 180 are provincial level, but many delegates from the provinces are not well known. They are municipal officials of the Federation [of Cuban Women] or the Union of Young Communists. Because the provinces nominated their own people. It is natural that in this struggle for integration, the different sectors will fight to nominate their people. The provinces nominated their athletes, a good number of them. The number was higher; the candidacy commission more or less adjusted all of that. But when an athlete is nominated, there are some who say: They have nominated an athlete. Will he be a good deputy?

But I ask myself: Will someone who has renounced millions of dollars in order to be loyal to the country be a good deputy? If all the deputies were people in the world who had renounced millions of dollars because they are loyal to a cause, the world would be full of wonderful deputies. Because they have a sense of honor, dignity, and loyalty. How many offers have been made to many of our athletes? In any other country with professionalism, nominating an athlete would seem like a hobby. But here they were not elected. The people realized this, and they were not elected. Sometimes, they nominated Clavelito [not further identified] who used to say: Think of me and I will make that thought work for you. He was nominated. What?

[Reporter] Fortunately I did not live through that period.

[Castro] Fortunately, I did so I am able to compare it. [laughter] I envy your not having experienced it, and I especially envy your youth, which makes it impossible for you to have experienced it. But at the same time I am happy I was able to compare and know about this.

[Reporter] I envy your having participated in 26 July and in all the lovely things you did before so that we could enjoy this very beautiful Revolution. I greatly envy you all those things.

[Castro] You are forgetting something. This Revolution would be nothing without you, the people.

[Reporter] Besides, we should give the scientists the results of the electoral process so that you will [words indistinct].

[Castro] [Words indistinct] I do not have the slightest doubt. [Words indistinct] abroad, because they had to go to assemblies to debate and nominate. Because they direct everything from abroad. They release a whole flood of propaganda that reaches the country every day. They must be more or less amazed. [laughter] They must not be able to understand this. They must not understand....

[Reporter, interrupting] They must be amazed, amazed at us. Your words that were broadcast on 7 February during the ceremony [words indistinct] were very illuminating and vital to the people's awareness of how to act during this election. At least I think so.

[Castro] Otherwise, these small town base-level delegates would not be elected.

[Reporter] We would not be elected. [laughter]

[Castro] Do you know what winning 25,000 votes would entail if everyone starts selectively saying: This one is a neighbor, this one I have met once, or I have never met this one. The method requires, first of all, high quality in the selection, because high quality in the selection is what gives us the moral authority to ask for support, to ask for a united vote. If the selection is bad, if it is the opposite, we would not have the moral authority to ask for a united vote.

It is the quality of the selection and the mass process, right? Because over 80 percent of the population belongs to the mass organizations, which did the work. It has been an incredible effort in a very short period. I hope that next time [words indistinct] even more consultations. The process should be even better. But quality is what provides the moral basis for asking for a united vote. One cannot assert that the selection is 100 percent correct. That is really impossible. No one will ever be able to assert this. There have to be some errors. There have to be some mistakes. There might be better candidates who were not selected. But that the maximum effort has been made—this can be asserted. We have witnessed this.

Those of us who have seen the candidacy commissions at work know how they worked and how they conducted the consultation process. Still, we could have used more time for further consultations. The more we improve the mechanism, the more assurance we will have that the people selected will be top quality. There will be a greater base to choose from. Half will always have to come from the base level, and those from the base level cannot be people....[pauses] A hospital director cannot be a district delegate. He cannot do both tasks. Therefore, in general, the district men will be people from the base level there, of the people, of the base level, and not well known. Now, you cannot take any well known person—a famous performer—and nominate and elect them from among the district delegates, because they are either on television or they are in the district.

Now, another thing in our democracy that is growing is the hundreds and thousands of delegates who are elected by direct vote. This is an immense pool of cadres for future deputies. This is their first experience of elections to provincial delegates. Do you know how many votes they have to get? A provincial delegate has to obtain as many votes as a deputy. He has to obtain half the votes plus one.

[Reporter] Over 50 percent.

[Castro] A candidate for deputy is better known than a candidate for provincial delegate. Do you have any idea how much these people know about the provinces? It is a much, much better method than any other method. It has all the virtues of democracy without any of the vices and corruption of the so-called historical democracies which we know of. You should have seen what those elections were like. The walls were all painted, posters, propaganda, political sergeants, a whole machinery, money. Rivers of money flowed, rivers of money.

[Reporter] I remember, of course. There was a polling station near my house.

[Castro] You are going to find this whenever you travel to any neighboring country. Well, let me see if I can go and talk a little with....

[Reporter, interrupting] Thank you very much, Commander.

[Castro] I will see you all soon. Hugs.

[Reporter] Thank you, Commander.

Castro Interviewed on Elections in Santiago

FL1302025493 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 13 Feb 93

[Interview with President Fidel Castro by unidentified reporters in Santiago de Cuba on 11 February—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] The elections are only a few days away. In your opinion, what are the basic tasks the work must be focused on?

[Castro] Perhaps I should have spoken about that. I think we must intensify our work. I think the candidates who are there must keep in touch with the voters. They should not break off that contact. Those who live further away....[pauses] For me it is a little more difficult, naturally, and that is true for some other comrades as well. We must increase our work up until the elections, and above all, the danger at this time....[pauses] If at another time there were misunderstandings, things that needed to be clarified, persuasive work to be done, today the danger is that we will become overconfident about how well this process is going. The danger lies in overconfidence about what we have done. That is the danger, in my opinion: overconfidence.

[Reporter] You have proposed a method that I think could be extended, and that is that the better known candidates promote the lesser known candidates. How do you think this experience could be extended on the national level?

[Castro] Well, for now I am trying to propose this concept as a national concept, apply it not only with the candidates in Santiago de Cuba, in my district, but throughout the country. These are ideas that can validly be applied throughout the country.

[Reporter] I wonder if the better known candidates know about this, know that through their actions they should promote the lesser known candidates.

[Castro] Well, I have not had the chance to meet with all of them, but at least here they are doing it. I imagine that many in the rest of the country may hear and see my speech and this may make it quicker, spread it quicker. It would be an advantage that way. But the truth is that disseminating things during the week with the power outages is a headache. But the sooner people get the idea that we must insist a lot on how it is fair and equitable to support those candidates who are not well known, the more awareness there is about this and the sooner an awareness is created about this, the better. Although I think [words indistinct] awareness about this. We could say there is a considerable level of awareness about this problem.

Just think what a task the provincial delegates have. They have to get as many votes as the deputies to the National Assembly, because they are in for the same district, and they have to get half the votes plus one. Or as people say, more than half. I have still not clarified the mathematical problem of why we should not say half plus one. I hope that one of these days someone will explain it well to me and I will then be able to apply it. Up to now I say more than half of the valid votes. Just think what a task they have. They are not as well known, because they are the candidates for delegates to the provincial assemblies of the people's government. The candidates to the National Assembly are a little better

known; first, because of the selection itself, the list drawn up by the candidacy commissions. Because there are figures in the scientific field who are not very well known but are better known. In general, the candidates for national deputies are much better known than the delegates of the provincial assemblies. But not all the national deputies are well known.

I think this process of visits helps them to become known, not nationally, but at least in their districts. We must let them become known in their districts and municipalities, because that is where the people are going to vote for them. Many are not known there.

[Reporter] Commander, the candidacy commissions have said that on 23 February, the day before the elections, the candidates should visit these places again. But [Esteban] Lazo said today that they should go a few days before also.

[Castro] Lazo is right. They should return and work as much as possible. That is important. All those who can do that should. The thing is that we are involved in so much work, and there are so many comrades....[rephrases] It is a little easier for those who are nominated for Havana, because they can go at night. But those who are nominated in other provinces cannot go every night. I think that those who are nominated for their own area should work every day up to 24 February. Those who are nominated outside their own area should try to go before the elections, to the extent possible.

They should be there on election day, at least. All those who can do this should, not the last few days, but starting now. All these delegates—in general, because there are also some who are nominated for other municipalities—but all those who are nominated for their own area, who live in the area where they are candidates, should continue to make visits every day up to 24 February, in my opinion. We must continue to work.

[Reporter] Perhaps it is a little presumptuous of me, but I would like for you to address briefly the progress in the country's major economic tasks. I am thinking about the sugar harvest, tourism, the food program, and biotechnology.

[Castro] That is very ambitious, and I am not going to answer your question. About the sugar harvest, to tell you something, I know that the rains have caused interruptions, and we have had some delays, and we must make a great effort. About tourism, I can tell you that it has been a very good year. They even say that the Santiago de Cuba hotel has had a lot of tourists. That is, a lot of tourists have come. About the food program, it is progressing, with the great difficulties arising from the lack of feed and fertilizers, which has affected some production. A lot of work is being done in the production of tubers and vegetables, and progress is being made.

The weather is not being completely favorable. There was excessive rain in Pinar del Rio, and it affected the area planted in tomatoes intended for Havana City. About 100 out of 300 caballerias there were lost. They cannot be recovered. There were some problems in Havana City Province. There has also been some excessive weed growth in Havana Province, because three things came together. There were high temperatures early on, winds from the south, and excessive rainfall. All this caused excessive weed growth. On the other hand, the mobilizations suffered some also in connection with the 20 December elections and the end of the year. With the number of [words indistinct] at the end of the year there is always a delay in the mobilizations. So agricultural work....[pauses] I am talking in this case about the capital, which had some heavy rainstorms, and the western region suffered from these problems.

But people have worked hard, and in general their attitude is not bad. The potato harvest is underway, and the other harvests are also underway. People have had a good response to these problems, but the weeds grew very quickly because of the winds from the south, heat, and excessive rainfall when the potatoes were not yet well covered. They were early rains, early winds from the south. In this regard, the weather has not been the best, but the situation is going relatively well in the production of tubers and vegetables in the western region, which is what I have the most information about.

[Reporter] Biotechnology?

[Castro] Biotechnology is progressing and going very well. But all that takes time. A lot of construction projects are being completed, and the scientists are making an exceptional effort, not only in Havana but throughout the country. The scientific hubs are increasing. Here in Santiago you can observe a great leap in the scientists' work. I was able to see this yesterday in the meeting I had with them during my visit to the Medical Biophysics Center. Well, that was not very long, but at least I have given you some answer.

[Reporter] Well, Commander, he was saying that it is quite late and you are tired. We want to thank you [words indistinct].

[Castro] Well, you have also put a lot of time into the tour, and you have helped to disseminate the ideas. That is the key. What are you doing tomorrow?

[Unidentified reporter] We have to report on what happened today, first of all.

[Castro] Good.

Fidel Castro Addresses Santiago Working Meeting

FL1602233693 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 2100 GMT 13 Feb 93

[Speech by President Fidel Castro at a working meeting to analyze the progress of the electoral process, at the Heredia Theater in Santiago de Cuba on 11 February—recorded]

[Text] [Castro] Dear Comrades: A few hours after coming to Santiago de Cuba, and based on the experience of the working meeting in Havana on 6 February, I proposed to Comrade [Esteban] Lazo the idea of holding a similar working meeting for Santiago de Cuba Province at the end of this lightning campaign we were doing. We could say this meeting would be a follow-up, not the conclusion, but rather a follow-up to this work we have been doing. Then we also had the idea of inviting the comrades from the eastern provinces, where we knew there was a more or less similar situation to that in Santiago de Cuba, to analyze the experiences of these days.

I think important changes have occurred in the past week, although the week has not yet ended, starting with the working meeting in Havana. We are aware that the meeting was very necessary, because there was confusion. There was a need for general guidance, because each person was interpreting....[pauses] Because people were interpreting the ideas and needs quite well, but each person was putting their own nuance, stamp, or thing on them. We are waging a hard, difficult battle. It is a very important one within the special period. This does not mean that the special period will be over when the elections are over, but they are a very important step forward to prepare us for the great struggle of the special period.

One of the most important things, and one that most concerned us—and this was clearly seen—was the great danger of making mistakes when voting. This was very present. This came up everywhere. A trace appeared here, when the comrade from Segundo Frente explained after the little trap....[pauses] Because at least the impression I got was that it was a little trap set by someone who asked which of the two candidates he was going to vote for. But that problem was very present.

This is primarily due to the kind of elections we have had in the last 15 years. They were base-level elections to elect the district delegates. These elections made us accustomed to voting for one person out of several, up to eight sometimes. There was a minimum of two and a maximum of eight. In the first elections there were seven or eight. There were more candidates. Some candidates consolidated their positions and were nominated by different areas in the same district, and the number of candidates dropped to two or three. (?In some cases there was only one.) But we had to choose from among them.

Now all of a sudden there are elections where it is precisely the opposite. They have other principles and another basis. However, we had to start with the other kind of elections, the traditional kind, the election of district delegates. These were the same: choosing. Then all of a sudden, a few weeks later, we are changing to a system that does not consist of choosing, although one can choose. The Constitution and the laws give the right to choose. One can vote for one, two, three, all, or none. That is the option that the voters have the right to. We respect that right from the legal and juridical point of view.

We are not trying to obtain anything through pressure or coercion. Rather, we are trying to use persuasion. It is a matter of persuading people about what we should do and how we should do it. It is a matter of persuading the populace about the difficulties that could result from our new method of holding elections. The first difficulty—I repeat—is that of making mistakes. Mistakes could have very negative consequences, within our concept. Because we would like to improve our electoral system, not complicate it, not lead it into a blind alley. Rather, we wanted to lead it to true improvement.

Once more, I should say that our system was very democratic, from the beginning. I remember the day when it was discussed and thought out. Everything hinged on the problem of who would nominate. Thus the idea arose that the people should nominate, that the residents of each district should meet and propose and nominate without the intervention of the party, that it should not be the party that nominated. Because we had a single party. If the party nominated, it would serve to strengthen the reactionary factions against the historical idea of a single party in our country. Because the republic arose, or at least was born, out of the last war for independence, with one party. Parties did not exist. Unfortunately, factions formed during our first war for independence. But there was a single force. A multiparty system did not exist, nor did it exist during our second war for independence. The multiparty system was introduced as an instrument of division and disintegration of our society and for imperialism in our country.

Those were the methods, and that was what they introduced. Starting with that, well, they disbanded everything. They disbanded the Marti party. They disbanded the liberating army. They left us with nothing; we were totally defenseless. We did not have a party or an army, which were precisely the two things which did not happen at the triumph of the Revolution in 1959. We were not left unprotected or defenseless. We were left with one party and one army. We cannot say exactly that we had only one party. Rather, we could say we were left with the remnants of a multiparty system, of several parties. We had one army and a movement that had played a primary role in that struggle, a unitary movement, not a sectarian movement. It was a movement that always tried to absorb, join others to it, and unite.

But we had the privilege in the initial period of the Revolution of again having the possibility of having a single party to guide the people in the Revolution. That is how, through persuasion, the uniting of the different revolutionary forces into a single party happened. This happened almost from the beginning, because from the beginning there was coordination among the different revolutionary forces. The 26 July Movement played a very important role, precisely because of its nonsectarian nature, because of the nonsectarian spirit that prevailed among its leaders. Although to tell the truth, there was also sectarianism in our ranks. We had to struggle a lot, and explain the tendency for division between those from the plains and those from the mountains, the

underground struggle and the guerrilla struggle, some factions with political ideas and other factions with different ideas. But everything was gradually resolved. It was mainly resolved through persuasion.

Thus, we succeeded in uniting all the political forces into what were called the integrated revolutionary organizations, then the party, until we had what we have today. We have returned to what had been the country's history, what Marti advocated before beginning the last war for independence. If we had a single party, there was a very serious problem, a dialectical problem, to be resolved. That was the issue of nomination. This argument could be used by the enemies of the idea of a single party. So we said: No, the party will not nominate. The people will nominate.

That is how the districts, the assemblies in the districts, the proposals and elections, arose. Who can deny this? There was some intervention by the party sometimes, but this intervention did not occur by violating a principle, but rather because there was a need for the president of the people's government to be elected as a delegate. So there was some promotion of cadres, some promotion of some comrade of whom it was thought that he could be the president of the people's government. This gave rise to some participation by the party. But then in the second....[pauses] In the last congress, we analyzed how to improve the people's government. We also discussed some ideas, whether the president had to be a delegate, whether we had to show that the practice of being a delegate and the president had some drawbacks and resulted in some instability.

We also discussed a lot whether they should have two-and-a-half-year terms, or whether the delegates should have five-year terms. I confess to you that I still have doubts about this. We had reached the conclusion in the commissions, in the preparatory commission, that they should have two-and-a-half-year terms. There are arguments pro and con. But stability had a lot to do with this. They told us that many delegates move house and then they are no longer delegates. So we came to the conclusion that the provincial delegates should have five-year terms, and that the two-and-a-half-year terms for the municipal delegates, the district delegates, should continue. But the district delegates were the ones who then elected the provincial delegates, who later elected the deputies to the National Assembly [ANPP].

This is democratic. No one can deny that at all. So our system was very democratic, and it was already the most democratic, because the people nominated and elected. It was just that they nominated and elected directly at the base level. But they did not elect directly on the intermediate levels; that is, the provincial assemblies and the ANPP. That is extremely important, because the ANPP is the highest body of state government. Our step forward and our challenge was to establish the direct election of the delegates to the provincial assemblies and the deputies to the ANPP. That is our great step forward and our great challenge.

This task was not at all easy, because we had to solve many practical problems: what it would be like, how to campaign, if it would introduce politicking into our country again, introduce division between the candidates, war between the candidates, competition for votes, those historical publicity methods we know of, which are repugnant and disgusting. They fill the walls, posts, and buildings with placards, banners, and posters. It is ridiculous propaganda, in a contest of every man for himself, in a war. We asked ourselves: How can we have direct elections without all those drawbacks of politicking and all those disgraceful things the old system entailed? How can we maintain the principle that the people nominate and the people elect?

The principle that the people nominate and elect is what puts us in first place among the democratic countries of the world. Because before, a group of people nominated and even elected. There is a system, one of the most common, in which each party by itself picks the candidates. Then, the different parties run in the elections, and they vote. Sometimes they vote for all the candidates; this business of voting for all the candidates is nothing new. They have one column. They must elect 20 deputies, and they have 20 names. So they vote at the top for the 20 deputies. But who gets elected? The ones they have put as number one, number two, and number three, and no one else. All the others are filler candidates.

What is really more ugly or detestable than a filler candidate? He works and seeks votes so that the one they put as number one will be elected, because it is the party that gives the ranking, and puts them there as number one or two. They calculate more or less how many votes they are going to get. They put all the others to work for the number one, or number two, depending on the share of votes they get. Some get two elected, others get three, and others get more. Sometimes there is a large number of parties, and I do not know how they fit on the ballots.

Besides, this system divides society. It atomizes it. The ideal society for exploitation is a divided society, an atomized society. The ideal society for imperialism is an atomized society, a divided society. Because the nation's strength is divided up. The nation's forces are at war against each other. They are not at the service of the nation, but rather at the service of party interests, and at the service of imperialist domination. This is why imperialism tries so hard to establish this system in all countries, and why these countries are terribly weak, incredibly weak, and our country is tremendously strong, incredibly strong.

Our country is showing this in this special period, and how! Who would have been able to resist with another system what we are resisting? But how could we maintain the principle that the people elect and the people nominate, and avoid politicking, avoid war, avoid competition for votes? I think that the best thing about our result is having succeeded in maintaining all these principles without any of the drawbacks we feared.

But the principle could not be so easy or simple. This principle cannot be easily applied in just any country. To apply this principle, a country must first of all have carried out a very profound revolution. The exploitation of man by man would have to have disappeared. The exploitation of some classes of the people by some privileged minorities would have to have disappeared. Without a system of social justice like that in our country, without a system of equality like that in our country, it would be absolutely impossible to apply this system.

But it did have drawbacks, I repeat once again. First, we have to know how to vote, understand the change, understand the new concepts, the new principle being applied. That is why we wanted to maintain....[pauses] How many were needed? If 589 candidates were needed, then we would have 589 candidates. That is what the ANPP needed. If we needed 1,190 provincial delegates, then we would have 1,190 provincial delegates. This prevented competition, because if you put up 2,000 to contest 1,190 posts, a general war will break out. If you put up 1,000 for the 589 seats, a general war will break out. We had to prevent a general war, and at the same time have democratic, absolutely democratic, elections.

That is why we established the principle that if....[pauses] Well, the citizens have as many votes as there are candidates. They do not have a single vote; they have more than one. If there are seven candidates on the two ballots, the citizens have seven votes. Nothing is being taken away from the citizens; they are being given more votes.

So they do not have the dilemma of asking themselves: If there are two, three, or four very good comrades, why should I choose between them? If all are good people, they do not have to ask themselves why they would exclude this one or that one, because this other one has such a good resume, or has merits, or is young and in the future may be an asset to the country, etc. The citizens have more rights, more options, but they are their options. Nothing is being taken away from anyone; more is being given. They are given more rights, more votes.

Now, of course, the candidate has to get more than half the votes. That is the great requirement, getting more than half the votes. This requirement to get more than half the votes, which is absolutely democratic, is what complicates the electoral system. This is what could give rise to trouble, problems, injustices, inequalities, and everything. These would be inequalities of another kind, not the inequalities of capitalism, where the candidates have to be rich. What factory worker would think of running or being nominated? What schoolteacher? What hospital doctor? In the small towns where there were so few doctors, the doctor might have been like a king, and have been nominated to be a city councilman or mayor. But that was because there was one doctor. But we have tens of thousands of doctors, and more all the time.

We have hundreds of thousands of professionals. Before, they would sometimes look for a professional to run, because they needed to have a professional who had funds, who had money, to do the campaigning. But the candidates were mainly the rich, the landowners, the sugar mill owners, the bankers, the (landlords), the owners of the big businesses, those who could pay for the election campaign, or those who could find candidates from their class, representatives, to make them senators so they would represent that class's interests.

An ordinary, humble person could not even dream of running. There might have been a small leftist party without funds, with 20 legal restrictions, that would run against the [words indistinct] and get one or two candidates elected, not to change the country through those infernal electoral mechanisms thought up to maintain the system of exploitation. The rich had money for radio and television programs, press, etc.

I lived through some of that experience, and I had nothing of that. I had no money, I had nothing, but I had to invent things. I cannot forget the work I had to do personally with a group of comrades to carry out clean politics in the midst of all that. It was impossible. And it was to get votes, to get votes. [repeats] But fortunately I had the idea about persuasion from the beginning. But that was very exceptional. That did not occur. The norm was the other thing. The norm was totally different. Even the best parties, the populist parties, immediately fell into the hands of the electoral machines. Senator So-and-So was a wealthy landowner. He was the party chief in a province, the chief of the populist party. I do not want to name names. The other extremely rich man was the party chief in another province. Each one had his electoral machine.

Under those conditions, it was terribly difficult to gain any ground. I participated, I began to participate, but with revolutionary intentions. Do not imagine that I thought it was any use at all for doing a revolution or changing the country. I was trying to reach certain points from which to develop a revolutionary strategy, by beginning to propose revolutionary laws. Because I already had the Moncada program in mind, when I was participating in one of those campaigns I am talking about. I was thinking about proposing laws in that congress, where they would never ratify them. But it was to have a banner under which to proclaim the need for a revolutionary struggle, an armed revolutionary struggle to carry out the Revolution. [applause]

That was one part, one stage, to be able to publicize all those ideas, and to be able to present that whole revolutionary program as draft laws. With that society, it was very clear to me that it could not be changed except with a revolution. But what would happen now, with our new concepts and our way of electing the deputies and delegates directly—a clean, healthy way—if we were not aware of certain dangers? If we were not aware of certain inequalities? Because other inequalities would arise, not between rich and poor, but between a very well-known

person and a person who is not well known. So we must add, as a great privilege and advantage of our system, the fact that almost half of the ANPP deputies have to be base-level deputies. No other country in the world has that. That is another thing that is sui generis about Cuba.

In what other country in the world is a city council member, which we can say is the equivalent of a district delegate, a member of the chamber of deputies, the legislature, or the senate? In what country in the world is the mayor of a small municipality, which more or less is the equivalent of our president of the people's government—although the president of the our people's government has more authority, that is something else, but in order at least to establish a comparison—a member of the legislature or the senate? In no other country do the local cadres or officials have the possibility of becoming members of the senate or the legislature.

In Cuba, almost half are base-level delegates. Another number is made up of provincial-level figures, as I explained recently. A minimal number, perhaps 20 percent, approximately 20 percent, are national-level figures. In other words, the vast majority of our legislature is of popular origin. However, they have to obtain more than half of the valid votes. Many of them, as we have explained several times before, are well known at the district level. With the creation of the people's councils, which has been a great development and a truly revolutionary change in the process of improving the people's governments, we already have better known cadres at the municipal level because they are elected by five, seven, eight, 10, 12, or even up to 15 districts. They are better known, but only in their districts.

If we want an example, such as the case of District No. 7, which nominated us, it is a large district with over 50,000 people. It has rural and urban regions, the region of Boniato is here, the region of Cobre, Hongolosongo, and all those districts there, the Jose Marti mini-district, here in the city. The residents of Boniato do not work with those from Cobre. They are not known in Cobre. They do not work with the mini-district residents. They are not known there. This has created a great problem of differences in popularity between the different candidates. We were not going to begin to fill the cities with posters in several days in order to increase the popularity of our candidates.

We should not have to advertise in the newspapers, because we only have enough paper to print newspapers once a week. Now, they can appear in television ads but nothing else: Vote for So-and-So, he is a good person. Television time has also been reduced. There is a lot less of it. There was no way, there could not be any way, within our concept, to make those people, who were presidents of people's councils or districts delegates, who were nominated as candidates to the provincial assemblies or candidates for deputy to the ANPP, into popular people. This is a big disadvantage, which we are running up against in practice, in real life.

But, of course, fortunately, there was a solution for this, in the principle that the people nominate and the people elect. Because who nominated these candidates? The party? No, it was not the party that nominated these candidates. These candidates were nominated by the municipal assemblies, which were directly elected by the people. These assemblies are made up of delegates nominated directly by the people and elected directly by the people. It is just that earlier they used to elect the delegates and the deputies to the ANPP. Now they were not going to elect them; now they are going to nominate them.

Who proposed the candidates? Of course, they would not be proposed by the same assembly. The municipal assemblies could not have any idea of national problems. They could not have the complete and absolute function of proposing and nominating the candidates. They did not have all the information to do so. They could run the risk of negative tendencies, like the tendency to nominating everyone from the municipality as a delegate or deputy. It was very important to find the method for proposing candidates.

Before, the candidacy commissions were chaired by the party. Now the candidacy commissions are not chaired by the party. This was another daring, courageous step showing faith in the people. The candidacy commissions were chaired by the Cuban Workers Federation [CTC]. Because, if we are a socialist state and a state of workers and farmers—and today we are a state of revolutionary people—what better thing could we do, through our congress and constitution, through the Constitution of the Republic, than to assign the CTC this task of chairing the candidacy commissions and fill them with the mass organizations? More than 90 percent of our population belong to these mass organizations. And our population, through their mass organizations, formed into candidacy commissions, proposed the candidates through a rigorous selection process and constant consultations of all kinds to propose the candidates for consideration by the municipal assemblies.

We completely saved the principle that the people do the nominating and the electing. Where else in the world does a similar process exist? Where else in the world is anyone asked who is going to be a candidate? In this way, we have implemented a wonderful procedure which we must continue to improve, which we must continue to enrich with experience. It has allowed us to carry out some very important steps, and to have considerably moved this process forward. The fundamental part of the process—24 February—is still to come.

We have chosen an unobjectionable process: to select the lists of candidates to be proposed and to approve the lists of candidates. If the appropriate lists are not made, the assemblies will not approve them. They must pass two tests: The assemblies must accept them, and in addition, the people must accept them. This process will work better to the degree that the selection process is better and to the degree that the work of the candidacy commissions is perfect or almost perfect, because of all the

steps that must be taken, all the approvals that must be obtained in the assemblies and the candidacy commissions themselves.

The candidacy commissions have worked feverishly in a very short time. They made a colossal effort to present us with work that we could call perfect. No, it would not be fair to call their work perfect. But it is very fair to say that they made the maximum effort to do the best work, to do perfect work. I am sure that at some future time they will do better, because they will have more time. We have been very pressed for time because the terms of the ANPP and the people's councils had already ended. They had been extended, and we had to hold elections in the midst of the special period.

I think we are the only country in world, living in almost war- time conditions, with the imperialist embargo and the consequences of the collapse of the socialist bloc, that would dare to hold these kinds of elections in these conditions. I think it is tremendous evidence of the courage of our Revolution and our people. Nevertheless, we are doing it. These elections had to be held, not only in the midst of the special period but in the midst of the sugar harvest, which with the difficulties brought by the special period has become a really tough and difficult task; in the midst of the cold-season planting and harvesting of tubers and vegetables; in the midst of the tobacco planting and harvesting; and of an infinite number of all kinds of activities in which we are involved.

We are carrying out this process, and it has been held in a minimum length of time. What has resulted from the effort these candidacy commissions have made is incredible, but when we have more time, as I have said, when we are not as rushed as we are now, the effort and results will undoubtedly be much better, and we will have much more experience.

Now, what was a principle that prevailed in the work of the candidacy commissions? Consultation, constant consultation, incessant consultation. It was necessary to find out what was thought, not by the delegates already elected but by the candidates for delegate before they were elected. They began to ask questions. They asked the fundamental actors and sectors of the country's economy. They consulted with the work centers and consulted with everyone. Approximately 1.5 million consultations were held to form a pool of tens of thousands of candidates, in order to present finally 190 candidates to the provincial assemblies and 589 candidates to the ANPP.

But there was the tremendous requirement of obtaining more than half of the votes. Do you think this is easy? How can it be easy? There we ran into one of the biggest obstacles, because a tendency toward preciosity, excessive selectivity, developed. Everyone was looking for the candidate they knew, whom they had seen face to face, greeted, spoken with, had an opinion about, or who was known through the mass media and whom they knew very well. They were going to choose. Votes were going to be wasted, to be lost. The chances of electing those humble men and women of the people, chosen from the factories, schools, hospitals, and communities to represent their people in the provincial assemblies or the ANPP, were going to decrease.

The best part of our system would be threatened. That is why the candidacy commissions' work was so important, because confidence in that work had to be created. Confidence in the quality of the nominated persons had to be created. Without this confidence, it is not possible to talk about a united vote.

It is true there are resumes, but the resumes are not all the same. That is why we have said that some differences were erased and other differences arose. Now the differences between the rich and poor were going to be replaced by the differences between those who have a long revolutionary history and those who have a brief revolutionary history, between someone who has 50 years of service to the Revolution and someone who has five years of service to the Revolution and therefore cannot have as good a resume as someone else. Differences had to arise.

Nevertheless, our provincial assemblies and the ANPP could not select men with 50 years of revolutionary service and super-resumes. They had to select young people, yes, many young people, and they had to choose students so that they could begin to receive education and training. Not just any students, but very outstanding students, very well known and with a lot of prestige among their comrades, students in the Federation of Secondary School Students [FEEM] and the Federation of University Students [FEU]. They had to select innovators, scientists, and talented people, people with a lot of merit and ability but not well known, because they have worked hard and they are not in the newspaper every day, or they have never been in the newspaper. They are not known.

Of course, they may have excellent resumes. They may have done this or that, made these contributions or done those things. But our representative institutions have to represent the people, the different sectors of the people, the different forces of the people. They must represent the different ages, some older, some middle- aged. They must represent young people. Because this is a chain, a ladder, which begins on one rung and goes up to the last rung. It is a lengthy ladder, which the comrades must climb, acquiring more and more experience to serve the Revolution, to serve their nation.

The candidates were not going to be all equally well known, and their resumes were not going to be the same. But even a good resume was not enough. There are people who do not read the resumes. There are people who do not read the newspapers, or if they read the newspapers they look for the political section, or the sports section, or the Americas section, or the comics, or

whatever, or they look for cultural things or entertainment things, etc. If all the resumes were published in all the papers, no one could be sure that every citizen had read the resumes. There are many people who do not have time to listen to the radio, so not even reading the resumes on the radio would do, or using television.

The resumes are very important, but they do not ensure everything. The resumes do not ensure that the voters know the deputies or have seen them some time. They have to go exclusively by the resumes. If they start to pick and choose, many of these comrades with excellent resumes might not be elected, and we would be wasting votes. We would be adding to the votes, or the nonvotes, of the counterrevolutionaries. Because disaffection with the Revolution is expressed that way: I will not vote for that guy, because he is an outstanding cadre of the Revolution, etc.

Some would do this for one reason, others for other reasons. There would be disadvantages for the candidates, but the popular candidates were not concerned. The popular, more well-known candidates would normally have the greatest chances of being elected The less well-known candidates would have fewer chances. We would be forced to hold many repeat elections. Would we find more well-known candidates? More deserving candidates? We could find equally deserving candidates, bu. it would be unlikely that we could find more deserving candidates. It would be impossible, or almost impossible, that they would be better known.

The candidacy commissions launched in their first wave, we could say, in their first string, in their vanguard group, those they thought were best qualified to hold these posts. Thus this—the selection system, the principle that the people do the nominating and electing, the work by the candidacy commissions, the excellent work by the candidacy commissions, although we must always admit that there were mistakes, as exceptions, the work by the municipal assemblies which approved those candidates, and through a rigorous consultation process—is what gives us the basis for bringing up the issue of a united vote.

This is what gives us the basis for bringing up the idea that the vote should not be scattered or divided. The vote should be concentrated, united, and should support the people's candidates and elect the people's candidates. It is precisely how things have been done, the principles that have been applied, that gives all the moral force and the entire basis for a united vote. The people have understood this.

Now imagine, comrades....[rephrases] and I will repeat the example of District No. 7, and there are many like it. It is a very large municipality. Any of those four comrades who are running for delegate to the provincial assembly has to get around 20,000 votes. Can you imagine a comrade from the ranks of the Revolution, and we are demanding that he get 20,000 votes to be elected? I was talking in the mini-district and I cited the example that if right then those who were there were asked to count to 20,000, I could walk all around Havana, come back after an hour, and they would not yet have finished counting to 20,000.

We are demanding that comrades who do not appear in the newspapers every day get 20,000 votes. These are comrades who have worked modestly, humbly, selflessly, for many years, and they are not well known. How can they get 20,000 votes, if the patriotic, revolutionary vote does not support them, and does not support them in a concentrated and united way? We could not elect them. Our excellent system, which has such a solid moral foundation, would fail because we had not understood that indulging in preciosity and choosing one by one and voting only for the ones we know would mean taking votes away from those comrades, refusing our votes to those wonderful comrades.

It would be truly sad and regrettable. What incentive would there be for effort? What incentive would there be for a scientist? What incentive would there be for an innovator? What incentive would there be for the cadres, so many good and brilliant cadres that we have? What incentive would there be for their work if they could not be elected? What kind of quality would our ANPP or our provincial assemblies have? What kind of democratic spirit would they have if the most modest but highly qualified ordinary men and women could not be elected? If the young people could not be elected? If the students of the FEEM or the FEU could not be elected? If many talented people in our country could not be elected?

That would be an inequality, from any point of view. It would be an injustice, from any point of view. That is why the idea of a united vote in favor of the people's candidates has so much power. That is why the revolutionary, patriotic vote should not be divided or scattered. Fortunately, we have been able to observe during this tour a very high level of understanding of these ideas and concepts. We can say that these are ideas and concepts of the masses, wherever we have gone in Santiago de Cuba. We should not be surprised, although it is surprising. We should not be amazed, although it may seem amazing, because what people are we working with?

I am not thinking only of their patriotic, revolutionary virtues, but their level of education and knowledge. I realized this today, there in the mini-district, when Comrade Lazo spoke and asked them about the ballots, how many ballots there would be, what color, what one was for and what the other was for. When I heard the people's answers, I realized that really if instead of two ballots of two colors, there were 20 ballots of 20 different colors, our people would be able to figure it out and vote correctly. [applause]

Not just two ballots but 20, because this nation is not the same nation as it was yesterday. This is a new nation. We remember with affection the old nation, which stood by us at the beginning of the Revolution and in the Revolution's struggle. But when the Revolution ended and we

met with the masses, were they the same masses as today? Were they not illiterate masses, the majority, or a large number, a high percentage, if not the majority? They were masses of people who had first-, second-, and third-grade educations. That was the vast majority. What could one have learned in two or three years in those public schools that existed in our country, without books, papers, or pencils and often without teachers?

If the vast majority was not illiterate, the vast majority of our nation was semi-illiterate. That is the harsh, cruel truth, but it is the truth. That is not the truth of today. I should say that today we can see something else. Throughout these years, we have met so many times with the masses. We see an energy, vigor, and health which could not be seen in those times. We see learning, knowledge, education which could not be seen in those times. We see clear, very clear thinking, which could not be seen in those times. In those times, there was faith in men. That is true. That factor of faith in men played a very important role at that time.

But now there are more important factors than men, and there is a different faith that we observe. This is faith in ideas, faith in justice, faith in the values of man. That is what has replaced all kinds of political bossism and personalism, cults of personality, etc., which have not been a practice here, as you well know. But faith in men played a very important role. Today faith in men has been replaced by faith in ideas. That is one of the most impressive changes I have observed in our nation. We should feel really proud of this, because we see these values prevailing today. We see these ideas prevailing today. This is what gives the Revolution tremendous strength at this time. This explains the reactions of the people, and I have seen reactions in these days everywhere, in the mountains of Boniato and in Hongolosongo and Cobre. What we saw in Cobre was impressive, incredible.

It reminded me of the initial days of the Revolution, and I saw that there was more joy among the people of Cobre—which now has 18,000 inhabitants—than there was among the people of Cobres on the day the Revolution triumphed. That says a lot, really. Were they from the generation of the time when we were in the Sierra Maestra? No, many who were young people during our time in the Sierra are now grandmothers, and they talked to me and said: We grandmothers also have to be organized. I told them that the grandmothers are organized everywhere. They are in the Federation of Cuban Women, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution. No one would be able to live in this country without the grandmothers. But the grandmothers were there, with their daughters, and the sons and daughters of the daughters of the grandmothers, and they had the enthusiasm that reminded me of the enthusiasm of the initial days of the Revolution.

How could that be explained, in the midst of the problems, in the midst of the tremendous difficulties we have and we know of? How could that patriotic fervor, that revolutionary fervor, that political awareness be explained? How could it be explained except through those ideas and values I am talking about? That made me reflect and think and remember what we were and what we are, and how people know what we were and what we are. Not only the grandmothers but the children of the grandmothers, and the children of the children of the grandmothers, know this.

The Pioneers know this. The grandchildren know this, and even the great-grandchildren are beginning to learn this, because many of the school-age children there were great-grandchildren. Those children were very impressive. They gave us an idea of what our schools are like. Today one of them spoke here at a school, by coincidence. I asked him a question, he answered, and I continued to ask him questions. I am still impressed with the things that child said. He is here, he was invited, but we do not want to ask him to speak because he already spoke a lot. [laughter] But I saw in that child the ability of an ANPP deputy. You may say that I am exaggerating. The child is in fifth grade, but it is unlikely that a person that age, in such a spontaneous way, would be able to give the answers that child gave, with the explanations he gave, and that showed us what our schools are like.

So our people, young and old, teenager and child, know what the past was like and what the present is like. The enemy's hope is that our great material difficulties will cause our people to weaken and kneel down. That is imperialism's dream. But they underestimate the powerful moral values, the powerful intellectual values, and the powerful ideas our people have now. I said to myself: Well, it is natural that someone who experienced slavery would never want to go back to being a slave. Someone who knew that sexual or racial discrimination existed, someone who knew that discrimination existed against the poor....[changes thought] which was the vast majority of the people, and because they were poor they were discriminated against, and more than discriminated against, held in contempt and disregarded, like dogs, because even a dog was better cared for by those bourgeois people than a worker or a human being was.

As I was saying today to a group of compatriots, they did not cry if a man showed up dead in the street, of illness or hunger, but they cried when their dogs died. I swear to you that I have nothing against dogs. [laughter] They are noble animals. They are good friends to man, but those gentlemen were incapable of feeling compassion for their brothers, for human beings, men. They were more capable of feeling compassion for animals than for people.

Someone who has experienced dignity, someone who has experienced freedom, someone who has experienced honor, someone who has experienced equality, someone who has experienced social justice—even though they did not live in that time—does not resign himself and will never resign himself to living without them. [applause] No matter what the price. We are paying a high price today, in the midst of the embargo and after the inglorious collapse of the socialist bloc. Since the

embargo has been intensified to try to make us surrender out of hunger and disease, we have been paying a high price for those values.

But other generations of Cubans paid an even higher price. Our Mambises paid it throughout the Ten Years' War, that war in which Santiago de Cuba and the eastern provinces participated so much. They went 10 years without a light bulb, most times without a candle, without a scalpel, without medical equipment, without a hospital, without a school, without anything, 10 years in the hills, defending what we are today, defending what we have achieved today.

When some became discouraged, when some became demoralized, and the pacts with the enemy began, and some began to speak of peace without independence, Maceo and Baragua arose as an immortal example of heroism and dignity. [applause] Not 20 years passed, and the Cubans took to the hills again. Then they had to endure even greater suffering, and [Spanish General Valeriano] Weyler's merciless concentration plan. That was the price our people had to pay, when they had not yet obtained their independence. Then what happened? The Yankees came and took over everything, and did not even let the Mambises enter the cities. They disbanded the liberating army and destroyed Marti's party. They subjected us to neocolonialism for almost 60 years.

That period brought a lot of suffering to our people, and that is what the result of those struggles had become. But we have experienced the result of an independent, victorious nation, a victorious revolution that has done so many things in so few years, that has transformed the country in so few years, that has transformed consciences, that has transformed the people, in so few years. So that out of an illiterate nation there is now a nation that has tens of thousands of scientists, that is a medical power, a scientific power, and—allow me to add—a power in heroism, courage, dignity, and revolutionary awareness. [applause, chanting]

We can call ourselves a revolutionary power, because we have known how to resist and been able to resist when others have surrendered, when others have yielded. We have found enough courage to confront imperialism on our own and say: Here we are, ready to struggle, ready to continue to resist for however long it is necessary, at whatever price necessary. We have become an example to the world. That is the importance, value, and strength ideas have.

The enemy must be sent this message of a united people, not a wrong message. A wrong message may be sent by those who share the enemy's soul, or have the enemy in their soul, and follow the enemy's instructions and defend the enemy's interests. They may send all kinds of wrong messages, but we patriots, revolutionaries, men and women of honor and dignity have to send a very clear message to the enemy about our unity, strength, and determination.

Now that I am talking about the enemy, we should not confuse the incorrigible, incurable, recalcitrant person who has an irreversible ideological disease, with a confused, mistaken, bitter person who does not understand. We must do tremendous work with the latter, and that is the work that I was talking about, house by house, man by man and woman by woman. This is very important. But it is important to talk even with the enemy to show him the weakness of his reasoning, to show him the injustice of his positions, to show him his error in having contempt for the nation, handing over the nation, selling out the nation, to show him the error involved in selling his soul to the devil.

We should knock on every door and every heart, wherever there may be a fiber, a small fiber, of patriotism, a small fiber of solidarity, a small fiber of humanity. In this kind of political struggle, we must be politicians, and we must always be politicians. The Revolution has always been political, because those who left the Revolution did not do so because we expelled them but because they wanted to leave the Revolution. In our country, since 1 January everyone had an opportunity and chance to be a revolutionary. The Revolution did not reject anyone. That is why it is necessary to insist that we must wage the political battle, what Lazo called quality. We must not think only about numbers.

That is why we said recently that everyone has to teach everyone to vote. It is not a matter of students teaching students to vote, but of teaching everyone. Women must not just teach women to vote, but everyone. The members of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution must teach everyone to vote. The Pioneers also have to teach people to vote, because they know how to vote. Everyone has to teach everyone to vote. Everyone has to knock on every door. Everyone has to reach every heart. Because the values we are defending are very sacred, very noble, and very powerful. These are the values of the nation, the Revolution, and socialism. They are the values of justice, equality, dignity, and the honor of man. These values have great strength.

As I was saying to some compatriots from Santiago, no one betrays his brother. No one betrays his mother or his father. No one betrays his children under any circumstances, or relinquishes them, no matter how great the sacrifices. This is how we must view the nation. This is how we must view justice. This is how we must view freedom. We must be able to say that no true Cuban betrays his mother which is the nation. [applause] No true Cuban betrays his brother, which is the feeling of solidarity. No true Cuban betrays his children, which are freedom, dignity, honor, equality, and justice. These are the values that we revolutionaries defend. [applause]

These are the values so many generations of Cubans have fought for, and for which so many Cubans have sacrificed themselves. We should know how to be worthy descendants of them. These are the values that make us strong. These are the values that make us invincible. We must defend the fatherland. We must defend the nation.

It cost a lot of work and blood to keep the empire from swallowing us up. Now without the socialist bloc, now when that empire has hegemony over the world, we have to show it that there is a nation with too much decency, dignity, spirit, and awareness, and too many revolutionary ideas to be swallowed up, to be made to surrender, to be made to kneel down.

On this 24 February, which marks the 98th anniversary—almost the centennial—of the start of our second war for independence, we will have the honor of waging this battle. This will be very important, since we are going to establish the people's government for the special period. The provincial people's governments, the ANPP, the highest bodies of the Cuban state, will govern the country during the special period. As we fulfill this basic duty, as we wage this battle, we will be taking a very important step toward the future. We will be taking a very important step in strengthening our Revolution to endure today's trials and even worse trials if necessary. [applause]

If I have always had faith in our people, today I can say that I have more faith than ever [applause] in the people throughout Cuba and everywhere, but especially in the people of Santiago de Cuba and the eastern provinces. [applause, chanting] Our struggles began here, from the War of 1868 to Moncada. We continued them here. We attained victory here. We took important and decisive steps here to consolidate it. That is why to the rest of our compatriots we can say, as a message of encouragement, enthusiasm, and struggle, because they will be capable of doing what we do, we can say to them that in Santiago and the eastern provinces, we have and will have invincible bastions of the Revolution.

Socialism or death, fatherland or death, we will win! [applause]

Fidel Castro Speaks at Meetings in Havana

FL1702030993 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 17 Feb 93

[Excerpts] Commander in Chief Fidel Castro has participated in two of the meetings scheduled in Havana between the voters and the candidates for provincial delegate and National Assembly of the People's Government [ANPP] deputy. First, Fidel visited Celia Sanchez Zone No. 73 in District No. 2 of Centro Habana Municipality, and later he went to Alberto Sarria Zone No. 33 in District No. 2 of Diez de Octubre Municipality. Here we offer details of these contacts between candidates and voters.

[Begin Castro recording] [applause, chanting] The capital has the greatest problems in the country, because it is a city with more than 2 million inhabitants. You already know all the problems this entails. A city with 100,000 or 200,000 inhabitants is not the same. Even Santiago de Cuba, which is the second largest city in the country, has about one fourth the number of inhabitants as Havana. Naturally, the greatest number of problems accumulate here. All of us know this. Because of this, the electoral process is more complicated in Havana than in the rest of the country. This is why I admire the comrades who have been selected by the candidacy commissions to be candidates for delegates of the provincial assembly and deputies of the ANPP, because they have the hardest work. That is the truth. The work is not as hard in any other province as here in Havana City Province, because of all the problems I have mentioned.

Now, the candidacy commission chose top quality comrades for these elections. Comrade Ulises [not further identified] is a delegate, a deputy for this zone. He knows that being a deputy for this zone is difficult, but he did not ask for a different post. He asked for a post here, with you, in a difficult place. [applause, chanting] This is what can be expected of a revolutionary combatant and a hero of the Republic of Cuba. [applause] Here there are up to eight Politburo members, who were selected and proposed by the candidacy commission in Havana. So the party has not shrunk from the battle, and these comrades have not shrunk from the battle. [applause]

Our people are organized to defend the country militarily. We have the militias, the territorial troops, the tunnels, the military units. They are well armed. But they also have to be prepared to wage great political battles. These elections on 24 February are a great, important political battle in the midst of the special period. [applause] Because we should come out stronger from these elections, precisely in order to be in a better position to wage the battle of the special period.

Think—this is going to be the ANPP of the special period, and the provincial assemblies of the special period. [applause] We must come out stronger from this political battle. You are waging this political battle everywhere, in all the cities. I repeat, this political battle is more difficult here in the capital. Thus your efforts, activities, tenacity, and steadfastness are more necessary. A short while ago, before this event began, you shouted: Fidel, for sure, hit the Yankees hard! I say to you now: Compatriots, for sure, hit the Yankees hard! [applause]

What do imperialism and the Revolution's enemies want? For the vote to be scattered and divided, for many of the candidates not to be elected. That is why on 24 February we must hit the Yankees hard. You, the voters, must hit the Yankees hard. [applause] You, the citizens, the voters, are the soldiers of the political battle of 24 February. You are front-line soldiers. You are soldiers because you are in the most difficult combat zone. Now you should feel proud of being Havana residents. [applause] You must be aware that the hardest, most difficult battle in the entire country is being waged here. [passage omitted]

Whatever we may regret....[pauses] And we regret a lot having had to halt the beautiful plans we had been carrying out, especially the housing plans in which we had invested so much. We had reestablished the minibrigades and all, and we had given a great boost to the

construction materials industry. Having to halt this hurts us deeply, when one sees how many tenements there are, how many people are living in crowded conditions, and how many problems we still have. We had been creating all the conditions for resolving this in a few years. We had organized the work force for all this.

Seeing the socialist bloc collapse, without our being at all to blame, seeing it betrayed as socialism was betrayed, surrendered as it was surrendered, sold out as it was sold out, and seeing how imperialism with its opportunism has intensified its embargo to make everything even more difficult for this nation—although all this makes us very sad, it is also a very high honor that perhaps very few citizens in the history of this country have had, this honor we all share of waging the battle of the special period. The comrade talked about her three sisters. This battle is as difficult as or more difficult than the battle we were waging then. In addition, we have the special period with elections, as proof that this is a courageous nation, a nation that has tremendous awareness. [passage omitted]

I saw a list of the events that were being held, and since I had toured Santiago de Cuba, I said: Well, I would like to see how this process is going in Havana. Although I know you are waging a difficult battle, you are fighting hard with very high morale in Havana. Without question, the capital is the most difficult battle front in this electoral process. I wanted to tour around and meet and see the public. I said I would have liked to go to many places, but there is not much time. There is little time, and some activities have already been held. Some were indoors, others outdoors. I said it would be good for the contacts not to be limited to three or four days but rather continue up to 24 February. This is especially important here in the capital.

I have heard that a lot of work is being done in the capital; the candidates are working a lot. This is very important. I think we have made a lot of progress in the last few days. I understand many things have been clarified. There has been a lot more understanding of everything, and people have become much more aware of the kind of battle we must wage and the difficulties we must overcome. How beautiful it is to see all the candidates acting like brothers, working together, working for the same cause, without competition, without contesting for votes, without war, without tricks, without cheating, and without politicking!

We have achieved a system, and I would like to know if there is any other like it anywhere else, without discrimination, inequality, injustice or anything, without racial discrimination, without discrimination against women, without discrimination against the poor, who were the vast majority of the population, because who was poor? That was terrible. So, well, we have attained something excellent, with our system, with the system we are applying. I think this will be enriched and bring many new experiences. There are questions that have not yet been answered. This direct voting establishes a stronger commitment; it subjects the Revolution to a stronger test. It improves our process. It gives the Revolution strength.

We should be very pleased that this process is taking place now, because it raises awareness and makes the people fight. This is what we have to do: fight. We must not forget that we have enemies. We have a powerful enemy, which is imperialism. It is more powerful than ever since the collapse of the socialist bloc. We have imperialist agents. They want this country to be a Yankee colony. We have enemies of the Revolution, lurking here and there, a few more or a few less. They are taking advantage of the difficult conditions we are experiencing, naturally. They have always taken advantage of things, but now they want to reap a big harvest because of the difficulties we are experiencing.

This makes us all fight. I really am very pleased with the concept we are applying and the results we are obtaining. The battle is difficult. We must make 24 February a great victory which will strengthen the country at a very important time, in the middle of the battle of the special period. It should send a message to the enemies of the Revolution, a strong message, a message to imperialism, that this is a united, strong nation, a nation that endures deprivation selflessly, courageously, with dignity, heroically, and continues moving forward. [applause]

I am taking away an excellent impression of this meeting. I am surprised at its size. [applause] I am surprised-....[pauses] I am not surprised but I marvel at the enthusiasm. I note your honesty, steadfastness, dignity, and the spirit with which you are waging this battle not only in your words and applause but also in your expressions and faces. We feel strengthened, because when one has elite troops like you, like the patriots and revolutionaries in our country, one can be sure of victory. [applause] That is why I said in the eastern region that we were certain and confident the rest of the country would also be like Santiago de Cuba. I thank you for your warm welcome, and with great pleasure I repeat our glorious slogan of socialism or death, fatherland or death, we will win! [applause] [end recording]

Assembly Candidates, Provincial Delegates Meet

FL1302175093 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 13 Feb 93

[Text] Candidates to the National Assembly of the People's Government and delegates to the provincial assemblies of the people's government hold fraternal and cordial meetings with the masses in the various districts and municipalities of Las Tunas Province where they were nominated.

The VEINTISEIS provincial newspaper notes that prestigious figures have conversed with the populace in an atmosphere of true friendship and camaraderie in meetings held with the Association of Small Farmers, the Federation of Cuban Women, the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution, student organizations, and

with workers from important economic and social centers. Ramon de la Cruz Ochoa, general prosecutor of the Republic and candidate to deputy for the Colombia Municipality, and other nominees as delegates to Las Tunas provincial government toured student, economic, and social centers in which they spoke of the sharing of experiences and various historical issues. They also celebrated the success of an outstanding cane-cutting brigade.

The candidates to deputy have had many other visit programs such as the ones developed in the Jesus Menendez Municipality between the people and Sugar Industry Minister Juan Herrera Machado; the meeting in Jobabo Municipality with Politburo member Alfredo Jordan Morales, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba for Las Tunas Province; and the meeting held between distinguished scientist Porfilio Pelaez and the people in Victoria de las Tunas Municipality.

Further on Meetings

FL1402214993 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 1800 GMT 14 Feb 93

[Text] Ciego de Avila residents are greeting their candidates with demonstrations of joy and support for the election process. These meetings have also made it possible for the candidates to find out about the initiatives and solutions that are being put in practice to cope with the current difficulties.

In Holguin, the candidates for deputies [to the National Assembly] and delegates to the provincial assembly of the people's government have been holding meetings with workers and students in the province. They are introduced, and the dialogue starts spontaneously. The younger ones want to know about the candidates' experiences in order to get to know them better. There are 52 candidates for deputy in Holguin Province. They include scientists, professors, members of the military, students, agricultural workers, and journalists. The candidates also ask questions of their hosts. A feedback mechanism can be observed. There are no barriers. All the people will go to the ballot boxes on 24 February.

Meetings Among Voters, Candidates Held Nationwide

FL1302032393 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 12 Feb 93

[Text] Promoting contact between the (?voters and the) candidates who will make up the provincial assemblies and the National Assembly is the aim of the meetings being held in all the country's municipalities. Thus, fraternal contact has been established between the voters and those who in the national and provincial government bodies will express their desire to continue to carry out the Revolution's projects. An example was the meeting between the candidates and voters in District No. 4 of Guantanamo Municipality. Each person was able to make his own evaluation in order to cast his revolutionary vote on 24 February.

Here they do not forget that 98 years ago, in a place in this district, La Confianza, other Guantanamo residents held high the banner of patriotism. They also do not forget that the Revolution's accomplishments live in their polyclinic, dentistry clinic, childcare center, and the factories that make up one of the most important industrial zones in the province. In District No. 4 of Guantanamo Municipality, the meeting between voters and candidates was mutually beneficial.

[Begin recording] [First unidentified speaker] So the workers can receive more direct information about [words indistinct] comrades have in their records. (?They are not limited) to just reading a resume.

[Second unidentified speaker] That is, it is a very necessary, mutual exchange in which they not only learn, but also we the candidates learn and gather a lot of information from the people. [end recording]

Havana Provincial Assembly Candidate Profiled

FL1302170893 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 12 Feb 93

[Text] Orlidio Dominguez Alfonso is a candidate to the Havana City provincial assembly; he is one of the twelve nominated by San Miguel del Padron Municipality. He is a peasant who later began his career in the wheat mills, and in the meat, candy, and bread industries, where he was an outstanding worker holding positions of leadership.

[Begin Dominguez recording] Truly, you have to feel very proud of working in such a sincere, modest, and humble sector, where the workers are constantly looking for solutions, giving their best, and making sure the people get their products. [end recording]

It is said that in the 25 years of the food industry, Orlidio has carried out difficult tasks working in the meat, flour, and bread industries. Today he is the director of the food industry in the capital.

[Begin recording] [First unidentified worker] That is precisely why he has reached the level he has reached—because he is a person who started from the bottom.

[Second unidentified worker] He is concerned with the workers' problems. He talks to the bakers and the [word indistinct].

[First unidentified worker] You could summarize his qualities as a person who is sincere, honest, modest, humble, very demanding, and very revolutionary. [end recording]

There is a reason he earns these recognitions and compliments for his everyday work.

Deputy Candidate to Legislature Interviewed

FL1302031093 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 11 Feb 93

[Text] Silvia Perez Perez, a candidate for deputy to the Cuban legislature, is a 39-year-old Ciego de Avila resident who in the 20 December elections was elected delegate for District No. 82 in Ciego de Avila Municipality. She has a university degree in economics. She spoke to us about the new responsibility she is undertaking.

[Begin Perez recording] I have to tie in all the tasks in order not to leave this one in the background. Of course, it is the one the people have entrusted to me right now, and it is the task of my work as such. The tasks at home, which even when [words indistinct] still have those remnants, and in part many of the responsibilities at home still fall to us women, along with the tasks of the National Assembly. [end recording]

But along with that work, Silvia also feels the responsibilities she has as a woman in our society.

[Begin Perez recording] I think this is one of the things we have to do here. We should try to make it so that women are not pushed into the background. Rather, we must show we are just as capable as men of fulfilling any responsibility that is entrusted to us. [end recording]

Roberto Robaina on Defense Training, Elections

FL1502205393 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 15 Feb 93

[Text] On 15 February, the beginning of the defense training year was observed at the tank division of Managua. Roberto Robaina, the first secretary of the Union of Young Communists, attended the ceremony which marked the beginning of the training year and where an assessment was conducted on the main defense tasks to be fulfilled by these soldiers in 1993.

[Begin Robaina recording] I was saying that the defense training year which is now beginning is special because it is not alien to the special moment that Cuba is experiencing. I insist that no matter how special the period might be, the people and the glorious soldiers which we have are much more special. Difficult times might come, more complex moments than those already experienced by the Revolution might come, but as long as our people, and as long as the leaders of the Revolution have people, soldiers, a division, and a steel fist such as this one, there will be no time, no matter how difficult, when we will not be able to overcome or be ready to fulfill the new missions which we might be assigned.

I believe this is particularly special because we are beginning the defense year only a few hours, a few days away from the beginning of one of the more decisive battles which the Revolution has chosen to wage at a highly complex moment. Undoubtedly, I am talking about the elections, which we will all participate in shortly, not only to cast our vote for a candidate to delegate or deputy but—as I believe I mentioned to some of you at the beginning of my visit—what is presently being voted at the ballot box is the project of the motherland, the Revolution, and socialism. [end recording]

The ceremony was followed by a tour of the various units of this large tank unit.

Electoral Commission Approves Absentee Balloting

FL1302202193 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 1503 GMT 13 Feb 93

[Text] The National Electoral Commission has approved an instruction that allows voters, for reasons of work or hospitalization, who will not be at home on 24 February, election day, to vote in the place where they may be.

Dr. Carlos Amat Fores, president of the aforementioned commission, explained to Radio Reloj that people in those situations must obtain authorization beforehand. He said that to do this they must fulfill the established steps of the instructions, among which is to mark oneself absent on the list where they are registered and to move one's name to the polling station where they are going to vote. By virtue of this resolution of the National Electoral Commission, the candidates may choose to vote in the district where they live or to register in the municipality or district where they were nominated.

The main issues that were analyzed during the meeting of the National Electoral Commission by the presidents of the provincial commissions were: to teach each voter how to vote correctly, instructing them not to include any write-ins on the ballot, as well as teaching them how to vote. It was also reported that the number of polling station has been increased in all the provinces and that, beginning on 14 February, the new lists will be exhibited for the public.

Dr. Carlos Amat Fores, president of the National Electoral Commission, explained that the remaining days should be used to check details to prevent the failure of any mechanism. He emphasized that members of the electoral tables will work with an outline of the legislation and electoral instructions. During the same meeting it was confirmed that the official ballots had already been sent to the provinces. Communication systems were also discussed.

Report Notes Voting Procedures, Ballots

FL1302034293 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 5 Feb 93

[Text] [Begin recording] [Reporter Hilda Suarez] Do you know how to vote on 24 February?

[First unidentified speaker] Yes.

[Second unidentified speaker] No.

[Third unidentified speaker] Yes, I know something, but there are still things I need to find out.

[Fourth unidentified speaker] I know that the deputies and candidates for delegate are distributed by district, and the ballots will have a circle on the top part so that if the comrade who is voting wants to vote for all the candidates, he marks that circle with a cross instead of marking all of them individually.

[Fifth unidentified speaker] I know there are two ballots of different colors. One has the deputies to the National Assembly and the other has those to the provincial assembly.

[Sixth unidentified speaker] There are two ballot boxes at the polling station. One is for the delegates and the other is for the deputies.

[Seventh unidentified speaker] Our Committee for the Defense of the Revolution met, and they gave us the necessary instructions. In addition, there has been good publicity. I think this is the time to give a yes for Cuba, right?

[Suarez] Thank you. [end recording]

[Maribel Puerto] These interviews by reporter Hilda Suarez show us that it is important to take up again the subject of voting on 24 February. In my opinion, that is the most important moment in the entire electoral process, because we are going to elect the deputies to the National Assembly and the delegates to the provincial assemblies of the people's government. As has already been reported, on 24 February, election day, there will be two ballots. The ballots will be different colors, and after we vote they will be dropped into different ballot boxes, which will be identified.

Alright. Now, as one of the people interviewed said, if I consider that all the candidates listed on the ballots—on one of them, as I have said, there will be the candidates for deputy, and on the other there will be the candidates for delegate to the provincial assemblies of the people's government—if I consider that all these candidates deserve my vote, I am simply going to mark a cross in the circle that appears on the top part of the ballot. Thus, I give my vote to all those candidates.

If I want to vote for one or some of the candidates, I mark the cross in the box that appears next to the name of each one I select. Of course, these instructions will also be given to you on 24 February at the polling station as soon as you are given your ballots. By then you should have read the candidates' resumes, which right now are posted in public places. For this reason I think it is very important to remind you how necessary it is to read those resumes, those records, now. They show the lives of those people for whom we are going to vote on 24 February. That is all for today.

Election Operations Test Scheduled for 21 Feb

FL1302030393 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 9 Feb 93

[Text] On 21 February, a dynamic test will be carried out throughout the country to verify the condition and functioning of the information system, communications, and other organizational links that will operate during the 24 February general elections. The National Electoral Commission has reported that more than 7,830,000 voters have been registered. The Commission has stated that 26,957 polling stations will function during the elections. This week, the training seminars for the polling station workers should conclude.

* China's Economy, 'Independence' Praised

93CA0057A Havana BOHEMIA in Spanish No 2, 8 Jan 93 pp 44-47

[Article by Jose Luis Robaina]

[Text] The Chinese say a picture is worth more than 100 words. If you share that view, pause for a moment before the sign at the entry of a little park in the heart of the old French concession in Shanghai, which prohibited access to dogs and Chinese.

This odious and offensive text in that virtual state within a state, which is what the foreign concessions were, with full extraterritorial rights, contains all the wretched drama of the voracious eruption of international capitalism into the history of this ancient country just when the last Qing Dynasty was crumbling into pieces, and with it the feudal regime that had endured for over 2,000 interminable years.

The concessions were zones in the city of Shanghai which the foreign powers wrested from the Chinese authorities; from there they directed their penetration of China for the profit of each colonial power and for them all as a whole.

In essence, these concessions were the tip of the iceberg of a system of exploitation and subjugation, including dozens of wars, 1,400 unequal treaties, and continuing aggressions, a record all too familiar to the nations of the Third World, in the name of civilization, democracy, freedom, and progress, which were used by the colonial powers to impose their will in an attempt to appropriate this vast and rich territory.

As a consequence of colonial domination, over 12 million Chinese workers were sold like merchandise in various countries where, from the mid-19th century until the 1920's, this infamous trade led to indelible martyrdom. In addition to the control of large regions through a colonial presence in Hong Kong, Macao, Shantung, the northeast, and other facilities granted them, the colonial powers longed for dominion over the entire country and at a certain moment, 1937, one of them, imperial Japan, began a war of total conquest with

a bloody invasion that left in its wake over 2 million victims and a devastated nation.

The traces of the militaristic Japanese were ineradicable. In just one city, Nanjing, in less than six weeks they massacred over 300,000 people, mostly civilians.

Hunger and Death

The people's memory is infinite and very detailed; in the semifeudal and semicolonial past, the overwhelming majority of the population lived on the very edge of hunger, and every year millions succumbed to starvation.

It was a time when it was difficult, very difficult to reach old age, as the average life expectancy was only 35.

According to official Chinese sources, in 1946 10 million people died of hunger and the year after that, over 100 million, 22 percent of the total population, suffered from this scourge and barely managed to subsist by eating roots and bark from trees, as the national literature recounts.

Those were the times of the feudal estates, the lords and masters of lives and property; this was a system closer to feudalism and slavery than to capitalism.

No Chinese citizen has forgotten these parts of their history. Some sequels of that era still remain today: Hong Kong and Macao recall old-style colonialism, while Taiwan is its newer version. And the backing of some Western governments and political forces for the Dalai Lama, a representative of the appalling medieval theocratic regime that prevailed in the Chinese region of Tibet until 1956, a strange blend of feudalism, slavery, and religion, clearly illustrates for them what the West really means by "human rights."

A Different China

Only four decades after liberation and the founding of the People's Republic, China is another, radically different country. It is a state united for the first time in decades; it has transformed itself into one of the earth's leading and strongest industrial powers, with increasing social progress; its international presence is respected because of its sovereign, independent foreign policy, a policy that opposes war, supports peace, and champions development and peaceful coexistence.

China has not simply left behind the reign of hunger. Today this country of over 1.160 billion people boasts a booming economy with 10 percent annual sustained growth rates during the past decade, with a domestic market that is well supplied, and with significant social progress. This can be summed up by the doubling of the average life expectancy, which is now 70.

And just realize that China's arable land, 7 percent of the world's total, feeds 22 percent of the planet's population. During the first years of the people's regime, by centralized planning they concentrated all available resources, including aid provided by the Soviet Union, and in a very short period of time constructed a complete industrial system.

In that way, and with their workers' heroic efforts, in 1956, just 15 years after liberation, they achieved self-sufficiency in petroleum production, and over the years they became one of the world's leaders in this sector. With another essential item, steel, in just 40 years they have moved from a production of less than 1 million tons (in 1949) to 70 million tons, a figure exceeding the steel production of Great Britain and France combined.

Thanks to the foundation they established in those periods and their subsequent advances, many new industrial fields have now arisen in China, including electronics, chemicals, shipbuilding, automotive and steel industries, and even military and space programs.

Agriculture is the mainstay of their economy. They set the pace in food production both in absolute terms and in yield per area, which translates into a market with broad social consumption, providing a varied and sufficient diet.

This development took on renewed dynamism in the early 1980's thanks to a series of structural economic reforms and China's opening to intensive international cooperation and foreign investment, allowing China to double the gross national product in 1990 and to expect to do so again by the year 2000, an unparalleled event.

Reaffirmation

Given these two domestic realities (the semifeudal and semicolonial past and the present of advances under socialism), the Chinese people have **not** wavered in their support for continuing the course they chose in 1949. They now have even more arguments in favor of this persistence, as their system can be compared with other Third World countries during the same period, and they also know what has happened in the former socialist countries of Europe and the Soviet Union since the collapse (chaos, conflicts of all types, national weakness, humiliation, impoverishment, and misery). For the Chinese, it is clear that national independence and their sovereign life as a nation are inseparable from socialism, for if capitalism were installed, they would become an easy prey of the imperialistic powers lying in wait.

They also know that capitalism would immediately create a class of wealthy owners and hundreds of millions of poor people.

Faced with such striking facts, the 14th Congress of China's Communist Party, held several weeks ago, categorically reaffirmed that they would continue their socialist course under the exclusive leadership of the party, the same organization that directed the wars of liberation against the Japanese occupation and against the pro-U.S. dictatorship of Chiang Kai Shek, the same party that organized the country to make a leap forward in just four decades, as it has done.

For the Party Congress, and the people's will it represents, there is no room for the siren songs of a multiparty system and the supposed virtues of the Western political system, for they have experienced in their own flesh what that really means, and the present experiences of former socialist countries reinforce their own memories.

Even though for a short time China also knew the "excellences" of a bourgeois parliament that they called swine, created in the image and likeness of the West after the fall of the Qing Dynasty, this was only the setting for power struggles between political and military warlords, and the colonial backers who were propping them up.

For the Chinese, human rights are, above all, the rights of the people to exist. This, they say, can not be guaranteed without the nation's independence, which they won only when they liberated themselves from the yoke imposed by the imperialistic powers, in their intimate alliance with the landowners and militaristic warlords, for the 110 years between 1840 and 1949.

March Backward Prohibited

For these reasons the Congress explicitly rejected any possibility of concessions in these crucial areas, since it maintained that the Chinese nation must today more than ever unite around the socialist program and devote itself to development in order to strengthen itself to prevent any regression to the neocolonial era.

So the Congress supported a stronger leadership role of the Communist Party, reinforcing its ties with the masses, improving its efficiency and morale, as vital issues, and developing around the party a single broad patriotic front and the great unity of all China's nationalities.

To improve its government system, the Congress urged strengthening the system of people's assemblies, reinforcing legislative functions, promoting the role of workers' assemblies and of neighborhood and village committees, as the foundation and pillar of the socialist state. They granted top strategic priority to ideological, political, moral, scientific, and cultural education, considering this vital for the government to achieve its proposed objective of socialist modernization.

The Congress also spoke out in favor of strengthening the Armed Forces as a "firm pillar of the people's democratic dictatorship, the great wall of steel defending the socialist nation, and an important force in constructing socialism with Chinese features," which must constantly reinforce its defensive powers.

In foreign policy, the Congress explicitly opposed hegemonism, politics based on force, and attempts by some countries to manipulate international affairs, and spoke out in favor of a world of peace, coexistence, and international cooperation, based on respect for the principles of nonaggression, nonintervention, equality, and popular self-determination.

All peoples, it was emphasized at the Congress, have the right to choose their social system and their route to development based on their own national situation, and all countries, whether large or small, powerful or weak, rich or poor, must be members of the international community with equal rights.

Strengthening the role of the United Nations and its own relations with Third World countries were other central themes of the forum, which spoke out in favor of the development of friendship and cooperation with all nations on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and an immediate search, through talks, for peaceful resolutions of any differences and disputes that might arise among members of the international community.

Without Foreign Interference

In the section on human rights, which the United States and other Western states use to meddle in China's internal affairs, the Congress explained that the problem is in essence a clear issue of the sovereignty of the nation in question, so they firmly oppose any foreign interference in the domestic affairs of other nations using human rights as a pretext.

On economic issues, the Congress proposed accelerating and deepening the reforms begun in 1980 with a move to what they call a socialist market economy, subject to state macroeconomic control and regulation, and based on the dominance of social ownership and distribution in accordance with socialist principles.

They propose, first of all, changing the operating systems of state enterprises, especially large and midsized enterprises, in order to stimulate their vitality by contact with the market, granting these enterprises broad autonomy, but without affecting state ownership.

The separation of government functions from business functions is another of the plan's key points, as the government is proposing that planning, leadership, and control of direct production units be concentrated. This will entail significant changes in the functions of planning organizations, which will henceforth have to concentrate on macroeconomic projections, primarily through instructions, rather than through the direct administration that has prevailed before.

Strengthening the agricultural sector, based on the family contract system, international cooperation, the expansion of foreign trade, and greater receptiveness to foreign investments are other fundamental aspects of this strategy.

To direct the party in the future, the Congress elected a new Central Committee, over half of whose members are new, with a substantial entry of representatives of younger generations. The Central Committee then chose from its own ranks Jiang Zemin, 66, a mechanical engineer, who was reelected secretary general.

Other members of the leadership core are Premier Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Li Guixian, Vice Premier Zhu Rongji, General Liu Huaquin, and former youth leader, Hu Jingtao, 49.

Barbados

Sugar Workers Defy Union, Delay Harvest Over Pay

FL1502191693 Bridgetown CANA in English 1802 GMT 15 Feb 93

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, Feb 15, CANA—Barbados sugar workers on Monday carried out their threat not to start harvesting the 1993 sugar crop over delayed payment of severance money. Workers at Andrews Factory, one of three handling the crop, defied their union's call to work, with some urging "money or no work."

The Barbados Workers Union (BWU) has told workers they can expect to receive severance before March 31 but disgruntled cane cutters and factory are pressing to have the money in their hands much sooner. The issue of severance arose after the private sector company, Barbados Sugar Industry Ltd., which manages the sector, was placed in receivership because of bad debts to the state Barbados National Bank (BNB).

Some workers went home Monday while others waited around for word from their union. The crop, being financed by government through the BNB, is initially forecast to produce 50,000 tonnes of sugar and fancy molasses. Last year's output of 55,000 tonnes was a 60-year low.

Receive Payment Promise, Begin Harvest

FL1602191893 Bridgetown CANA in English 1742 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, Feb 16, CANA—Workers began Barbados' 1993 sugar cane harvest Tuesday after an assurance from the prime minister on payments of severance and a productivity bonus.

Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford promised Monday that workers would receive severance on March 31 and the second half of their bonus by this monthend.

Workers at the island's three factories on Monday made good their pledge not to start the harvest, saying payment of severance was needed immediately and they wanted an assurance that they would get their money.

Severed transport workers have been urging government to pay them their money since late last year.

Sandiford's assurances were made following meetings with people he termed "interested parties", including the sugar industry's joint receivers/managers.

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Last year's output of 55,000 tonnes was a 60-year low.

Regional Telecommunications Project Under Way

FL1602190193 Bridgetown CANA in English 1601 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, Feb 16, CANA—A Caribbean telecommunications project to boost national and regional emergency preparedness is on target, says the regional co-ordinator of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA).

The three-phase programme, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), is aimed at development and testing of a regional emergency telecommunications network and production of a users procedure and operations manual.

"This project is very much on time and we expect to finish primary aspects by the end of May," said Jeremy Collymore, CDERA's regional co-ordinator.

Workshops to review the manual and training support have also been built into the project.

Collymore told CANA Tuesday the first of three phases involved assessment of emergency telecommunications resources within the region with a view to rationalising frequencies and systems.

"We have been looking at systems within participating states, their resources, how adequate these are and how inter-connected these systems are," said Collymore, who is based in Barbados.

A CDERA team, including a resource person funded by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), is currently visiting eight member countries of the regional emergency system to assess national and regional resources and weaknesses.

Workshops are planned for the middle of March in Barbados under phase two to review recommendations of consultants and examine the draft users manual.

Collymore said attempts would be made to harmonise national emergency communication plans with the participation of regional telecommunications officers and national disaster co-ordinators from 14 CDERA member states.

Phase three, scheduled for the British Virgin Islands April 19- 24, covers exercise design and contingency planning with a particular focus on communications, said the CDERA co-ordinator.

CIDA's funding is to the tune of 110,000 dollars (US).

Grenada

Banana Growers Receive Price Drop

FL1602191193 Bridgetown CANA in English 1705 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] St. George's, Grenada, Feb 16, CANA—A surplus of bananas on the main United Kingdom market has led the Grenada Banana Cooperative Society (GBCS) to announce a four cents drop in the price it pays farmers for purchases.

The GBCS said it would now pay EC15 cents for every pound of bananas, the lowest price farmers have received since 1985.

General Manager Anthony Issac said market conditions over the past four months had caused a reduction in the price the association received from sales to the United Kingdom.

The price has dropped from 39 to 35 cents per pound.

"Given the situation, it has now become impossible for the society to continue to hold its current prices to growers without detrimental consequences for its financial standing and without seriously affecting its normal business," Issac said.

Haiti

Student Group on Violence, Bazin, UN/OAS Mission

FL1602215993 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] The new watchword from the National Federation of Haitian Students [FENEH] is mobilization at the university. The members of FENEH intend to make democracy triumph within the university. During a news conference on 15 February at the School of Agronomy, they protested a communique issued by the Ministry of Interior relating to the holding of demonstrations at the university. Guilloto Francois filed the following report.

[Begin recording, in Creole] [Francois] The FENEH advised on 15 February that it condemned the Ministries of Interior and National Defense communique requiring that students do not demonstrate within the confines of the universities. The students say that they will continue to mobilize themselves so that democracy can develop in the country. The FENEH met with the council of students of the School of Agronomy and made a negative assessment of the school's activities, two weeks after the resumption of classes.

The students denounced the situation of violence they experience. They condemned the illegal imprisonment of several medical school students who police are still keeping in prison, according to them, after a demonstration that the students of the faculty held on 11 February against the current authorities. According to students, a situation of violence has spread throughout the campus. They named the Schools of Language, Agronomy, and Medicine.

[Unidentified student] The situation at the School of Agronomy is the same as in the university in general where the classes are basically suspended. We know that the measures that the authorities took were to impede the normal running of the university. That is why we protested against those measures.

Every day, the situation deteriorates at the university. The authorities are not doing anything to improve the situation at the university. Not only do they not have any plans for the university, they are just destroying the university. We must now fight for the university to operate [words indistinct] in order to prevent such a dictatorship to continue destroying the country [words indistinct].

[Francois] Regarding the strike called for 16 February, the FENEH gave its position.

[Unidentified student] If after 17 months the government of Bazin cannot lead the country, it is due to the resistance of the people during the 17 months. Today, Haitians must continue fighting in order to dismiss the repressive government of Marc Bazin, as it is still defending people taking a free ride and fake democrats. The FENEH therefore supports and encourages all initiatives taken by the masses in order to solve, in their interests, the country's crisis so that dictatorship and repression can be destroyed in the country.

[Francois] Regarding the presence of international observers in Haiti, the federation advised that it is waiting for the UN/OAS mission to create the conditions under which the people can express themselves. During the students' conference, several observers from the international mission were noticed. [end recording]

Strike Participation Minimal; Transportation Normal

FL1602203893 Port-au-Prince Radio Nationale in Creole 1400 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Report by Nationale reporter Nestor Saby—recorded]

[Excerpts] Regarding the call for a 16 February strike, issued by several political organizations, our reporter Nestor Saby is on the streets of Port-au-Prince to report on the situation right now.

[Saby] Thank you Chantal. We greet all Radio Nationale listeners. Several political and grassroots organizations launched a call for a strike today. We can say that the strike has not been respected. Public transport is operating as usual, especially in Port-au-Prince. We can say that of the places we have been, only the commerce sector has not yet begun working. On Grand Rue, the stores are open and the street vendors are there as usual looking for their profit.

We can say that, as we said earlier this morning, many students started off for school. Later, classes were hampered. In some schools, many students showed up. In some others, the teachers did not show up. In some others, there were not enough students to continue classes. We can say that many other schools are holding classes. [passage omitted]

We can then say that there has not been a widespread respect for the strike. Public transportation is running normally. The business sector is basically working normally since the stores are open and the street vendors are on the streets. Factory workers are able to go to work. We do not know if the situation will change. We can see that the strike has not been respected because we are on the streets.

Jamaica

Opposition Calls for Finance Minister Dismissal

FL1602210293 Bridgetown CANA in English 1933 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 16, CANA—Opposition leader Edward Seaga has called for the firing of Finance Minister Hugh Small and (Central) Bank of Jamaica (BOJ) Governor Roderick Rainford as government and opposition kept up their cross-talk in the big currency scam at the Central Bank.

"Resignations in such a matter are niceties," Seaga said. "They should be fired immediately for gross dereliction of duty."

Seaga also charged that the affair involving irregularities and apparent fraud in the system under which the Central Bank used roving agents to purchase foreign exchange on Jamaica's liberalised foreign exchange market, was causing some foreign banks to distance themselves from correspondent banks in Jamaica.

So far, claims in the region of J85 million dollars have been made against the Central Bank by persons who said they sold foreign exchange to agents, but who had their payments stopped because the bank did not receive the currency. A missing bank employee also operated a J70 million dollar overdraft facility at one commercial bank, ostensibly for foreign exchange dealings on behalf of the Central Bank. And two promissory notes, totalling nearly U.S.7 million dollars, and which the Central Bank says were fraudulent, were issued against it and drawn on banks in the Cayman Islands.

Bankers Association president, Douglas Folkes, said correspondent banks have been calling to seek clarification on the issues surrounding the developments at the Central Bank but there was nothing suggesting panic.

"The concern has not been one which has got to the point of cutting off lines of credit or anything like that," Folkes said.

"We have not seen any evidence of any such thing," said Delroy Lindsay, chief executive of the Workers Bank here after a regular meeting Tuesday with officials of one of its correspondent banks, the Bank of New York. Lindsay suggested the matter would have little repercussion on international relations once the matter was dealt with both speedily and forthrightly.

Small last week named former BOJ governor and international civil servant, Horace Barber, to inquire into the fiasco. A committee of the Central Bank's board was also looking into the matter.

Seaga based his dismissal call on an allegation that Small and Rainford knew of the irregularities since last November, based on an internal memo from the bank's legal affairs officer to a deputy governor over the correctness of an employee of the bank being used as a "sub agent."

Rainford, on the job only since October, remained mum on Seaga's overnight demand, but Small declared his confidence in the governor and said his own fate would not be determined by Seaga.

"I have absolutely no reason to question the integrity or competence of the governor of the bank and I deplore Mr. Seaga's attempt to suggest otherwise," Small said.

"As for myself, whether or not I retain my position as minister of finance is not going to be determined by the leader of the opposition."

The issue has been simmering since late last year when Seaga charged that the Central Bank was buying foreign exchange at rates higher than what was posted—a charge at the time denied by the bank.

Trinidad and Tobago

Government Refuses To Postpone Workers' Retrenchment

FL1602190293 Bridgetown CANA in English 1617 GMT 16 FEb 93

[Text] Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Feb 16, CANA—The Trinidad and Tobago Government has told public sector unions it cannot postpone retrenchment of public utilities workers.

"...The government advised the National Trade Union Centre (NATUC) and the Public Services Association (PSA) that it could neither postpone the rationalisation of the public utilities nor assume the role of a bargaining unit for public service industrial matters," the prime minister's Information Division said Monday.

NATUC, an umbrella body representing more than a dozen trade unions, has been calling on government to suspend plans to retrench thousands of workers from the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), the Port Authority and the Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC).

The federation has also been urging government to consider the ministerial committee comprising Finance Minister Wendell Mottley, Energy Minister Barry Barnes, Education Minister Augustus Ramrekersingh, and Minister Responsible for the Public Service Gordon Draper, as the body to negotiate terms and conditions for settlement of a billion dollar wages and salaries debt owed public servants.

"The government, however, is of the view that industrial relations issues are best resolved through labour-management interaction and is anxious that the public service unions engage in dialogue with the chief personnel officer to work towards an early resolution of the issue of the public service debt," the statement said.

Thousands of government-paid workers have marched through the streets of Port-of-Spain to protest retrenchment plans and delay in payment of a three billion dollar (one TT dollar - 23.5 US cents) debt which resulted from a suspension of increments and arrears on a two per cent increase in salary in 1987.

Government said it also met last week with the National Union of Government and Federated Workers, NATUC, the Employers Consultative Association and the Chamber of Commerce.

"The meetings provided the opportunity to share views on national issues and matters that were specific to the relevant parties.

"During the interaction with labour and business, the parties discussed the rationalisation of the public utilities. The urgent need for a reduction in the workforce at wasa was a major agenda item," government said.

Salinas Completes Visits to Venezuela, Nicaragua

PA1502230693 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 15 Feb 93

[Report by special envoy Roberto Garduno Espinoza]

[Text] President Carlos Salinas de Gortari completed an international tour that started in Caracas, Venezuela, and ended in Managua, Nicaragua, aimed at strengthening the development of Central America and to advance regional peace.

During his stay in Nicaragua, Salinas announced the reduction of average tariffs applied to products that arrive from our continent's central area to Mexico, something long-awaited by the Central American governments and producers.

[Begin Salinas recording] In Caracas, we announced that Mexico was willing to review its tariff structure in relation to Central America. On 14 February, we agreed to reduce by half all tariffs from Central American countries by granting each country the lowest tariff we had with any of the other Central American countries. Nicaragua stands to benefit the most, because from now on the average tariff for practically 80 percent of their exports to the Mexican market will be about 4 percent. [end recording]

Doubtless Central America is an area of permanent interest to Mexico. That is why President Salinas took a crucial step in Caracas, Venezuela, on 12 February to advance the pacification, democracy, and the economic modernization of Central America when he announced to the presidents of Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama the granting of a line of credit worth $100 million for the regional development bank. In this connection Nicaraguan President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro referred to the attitude of the Mexican president and government toward Latin America.

[Begin Chamorro recording] The presence of my good friend President Carlos Salinas de Gortari in Nicaragua is faithful proof of the solid ties of friendship that join our countries. His very presence in this Central American land is not new. Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and Costa Rica have also been visited by the Mexican president. If we wanted to highlight an example of the cooperation with Central America, we must speak the name of Mexico with gratitude and recognition—a profoundly Latin American country, and pro-Central American by vocation. [end recording]

During his stay in Managua, Salinas de Gortari insisted that the Latin American integration process had been worn out by rhetoric and today the peoples demand actions and deeds for a better standard of living.

The Mexican president was in Caracas, Venezuela, on 11-12 February, where he took part in the eighth meeting of the Group of Three [G-3], which comprises Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela, and in a meeting with the five Central American presidents plus the president of Panama. The G-3's main conclusion is to boost a trilateral free market process to begin operating on 1 January 1994.

Exiled Haitian Prime Minister Arrives in Country

PA1402033993 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 1624 13 Feb 92

[Text] Mexico City, 13 Feb (NOTIMEX)—Rene Preval, prime minister of deposed Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's administration, stated here on 13 February that Haiti is struggling for democracy, and if it wins with the help of international organizations, the victory will belong to the whole world.

Preval arrived in this city with Clifford Hanz Larosa, department director of the Information Ministry in the Aristide administration. The two have received diplomatic asylum in Mexico.

During a news conference, Preval thanked the people and Government of Mexico for the support and diplomatic protection they have given 33 Haitians.

Preval recalled that 3,000 Haitians have died, 40,000 have left the country, and another 200,000 have been forced out of their places since the installation of a de facto regime on 30 September 1991 following a coup d'etat.

Preval said that the day before his departure from his country, several journalists were arrested, tortured, and jailed. He appealed for solidarity with them.

El Salvador

Cristiani Reviews Framework Agreement, Benefits

PA1602012893 San Salvador Radio Farabundo Marti Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 15 Feb 93

[Text] President Alfredo Cristiani on 15 February revealed the benefits derived from the framework agreement he signed this weekend with the presidents of Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, and Honduras. According to the president, the commercial liberalization program will begin before 30 June and strive to liberalize trade between Venezuela, Colombia, and Mexico and Central American countries.

[Begin Cristiani recording, broadcast in progress] ....those in the production sector, the ones who will eventually use the framework agreement, as follows: First, the liberalization program must be established before 30 June 1993 and trade liberalization will be ruled by the following criteria:

a) A list of products will be immediately declared tax-exempt and will be implemented on the date the agreement begins; that is the first list, meaning a list of products that will be declared tax-exempt at once.
b) Colombia and Venezuela will declare a list of Central American products tax-exempt within a three-year period. The Central American countries will declare this same list of products, manufactured in Colombia and Venezuela, tax-exempt within five years. This is where an asymmetrical phase begins and it will benefit the Central American region a little.
c) The third list works the same way. First, Venezuela and Colombia will declare a list of Central American products tax-exempt within a five-year period, and the same list of products, manufactured in Venezuela and Colombia, will be declared tax-exempt in Central America within 10 years.

There is also a special list made up of a few products. They will be declared tax-exempt much later and this has to be negotiated later. Certain products are critical and they have been left out of the free trade agreements. We have discussed the possibility of negotiating the list, even if it is done in the long term. Coffee, for example, is always left out of the free trade agreements. Sugar has been another topic. The same goes for oil by-products. In sum, it involves a small list of products.

The agreement has an important aspect, dealing with the norms on the origin of products. It will allow a control of the merchandise's origins, or where it comes from, before entering Central American territory or Colombian and Venezuelan territory. We have agreed to create the so-called Central American, Colombian, and Venezuelan Management Commission, which will be in charge of managing the agreement. The commission will be made up of the Central American economy or foreign trade ministers. [end recording]

Technical Cooperation Accord Signed With Colombia

PA1602153593 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] The Salvadoran and Colombian Governments on 15 February signed a technical cooperation agreement to strengthen development programs in the national reconstruction process. With support from the UN Development Program, the Solidarity and Social Emergency Fund, and the National Rehabilitation Program, Colombia will provide technical aid for priority programs for demobilized and disabled Salvadoran combatants in the next six years. According to Planning Minister Mirna Lievano de Marquez, the program will cover many areas and attempt to persuade nongovernmental organizations to participate more actively in the national reconstruction process.

[Begin Lievano recording] The cooperation will be geared toward promoting several main areas, including a strengthening of activities related to small and microfirms; productive agriculture programs; municipal decentralization and development; attention to disabled former combatants; community organization, development, and participation; and attention to women who were relocated due to armed actions. [end recording]

The Colombian National Rehabilitation Program will give our country technical cooperation. The institute's director said the Colombian and Salvadoran postwar situations are similar, thus the programs will be implemented more efficiently.

[Begin unidentified official recording] We have been working in this field, especially in the reinsertion process of former combatants, for almost three years. We have gained experience and learned from our mistakes. We would like to share our experiences so our mistakes are not repeated in El Salvador. [end recording]

The agreement was signed by Colombian Deputy Government Minister Riveros Serrato and the Salvadoran planning minister in the presence of the Colombian ambassador to our country and a UN Development Program representative. The Colombian and Salvadoran officials mentioned the possibility of signing more cooperation agreements in the future.

Land Transfer Said Delayed by Logistic Problems

PA1502195693 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSKL in Spanish 1200 GMT 15 Feb 93

[Text] Official sources have confirmed that the UN observers for El Salvador is monitoring closely the land transfer process, whose first phase was delayed. So far more than 80 private properties have been transferred to former guerrilla and Army combatants. The sources added that the goal established for this first phase could not be achieved due to delays stemming from a lack of logistics.

To complete this first phase the government received more than $40 million from the international community. The money was used to purchase the land, the sources added.

Deployment of Civilian Police Postponed

PA1602225493 San Salvador Radio Venceremos Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] Logistic and technical problems have caused the postponement of deployment of the first contingent of the new Salvadoran National Civilian Police, PNC, until March. The first PNC contingent was scheduled for deployment on 17 February.

PNC Director Jose Maria Monterrey held a news conference with the international media and explained that the group of 567 police who graduated on 5 February will receive refresher courses to complete their professional training.

The basic refresher course includes topics such as guidance, analysis of the peace agreements signed by the government and the former rebels in January 1992, the basic law of the PNC, police chain of command, disciplinary regime, and administrative guidelines.

In accordance with the agreements, the PNC will gradually replace the public security corps that operated under military command. The PNC director said the deployment of the new police will begin in northern Chalatenango Department.

FMLN Leader Discusses Peace Agreements, Issues

PA1302143393 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 1300 GMT 11 Feb 93

[Interview with Joaquin Villalobos, leader of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, FMLN, by unidentified reporter in San Salvador on 11 February—live or recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] This morning we will interview Joaquin Villalobos, leader of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN]. Welcome to the interview segment.

[Villalobos] Thanks for inviting me again.

[Reporter] We have heard about a number of reports over the last few weeks and we would like to hear the FMLN position on them.

In light of the FMLN role in fulfilling the peace agreements, we first would like to discuss the agreements. There are other affairs we would like to discuss, however. We would also like to hear about the proposals on the 1994 elections.

Now, however, we would like to hear about the UN Security Council call to the government and the FMLN. As of a few days ago the destruction of the missiles was still pending. What can be said about that? How is the destruction process going and how conditioned is it to the government's fulfillment of the agreements regarding purging the Army?

[Villalobos] I believe the chapter on weapons is already closed. The FMLN is a legal political party. I believe civilian society should undertake the remaining efforts necessary to fulfill the peace agreements in its different aspects.

That was the problem with the weapons. At first it was a political problem—practically a problem of group interests, I would say—in connection with the problem of land. It caused a small paralysis, which lasted a few days, then it was solved and now there are new agreements on how to guarantee certain land transfers.

At this point, however, that chapter has no bearing or significance. Now we are in a technical or bureaucratic stage in solving the problem, and this includes the missile affair.

[Reporter] The letter from the UN Security Council president expresses concern about, quote, the FMLN not completing the destruction of its weapons within the agreed time frame, in spite of the previously stated assurances and therefore failing to fulfill its obligations in accordance with the peace agreements, unquote. Is this a concern only for technical reasons, as you said, which could have delayed the process and not due to political considerations or a lack of will?

[Villalobos] I believe that when that phrase was used it was obvious—as the secretary general would not be so naive as to use that phrase based on a technical problem—that there were some political problems. At this point that problem no longer exists, however.

I believe that between 11 and 12 February the remaining conventional weapons, which are in the eastern area, will be destroyed. The missiles are already under UN control. They have been placed in containers—this had not been done at the time the letter was written—and over the next few days they will begin the destruction process, which involves technical requirements.

It is also necessary to get their serial numbers to find out from where those missiles came. We have been asked to provide their serial numbers, but in certain cases the numbers were erased.

Thus, we already are in a strictly technical phase that could last as little as a few days.

[Reporter] The chapter on weapons is closed according to you, but fulfilling the peace agreements, and especially fulfilling those points that are still pending, is not a closed chapter. How does the FMLN evaluate the process, even though the role it plays is now different?

Throughout 1992, the process of dismantling the military apparatus, as well as destroying the conventional

and sophisticated weapons, were all conditioned to the other party's fulfillment of the agreement. Now, the FMLN is playing a different role, but there are still agreements pending such as the land transfer problem and unfulfilled commitments on economic or social matters such as the socioeconomic concerted agreement forum, which should start bearing fruit immediately.

Thus, how does the FMLN see the situation now and with the pending points?

[Villalobos] We could say that the cease-fire is a period for transferring power and instruments to civilian society. During that stage it is was logical to use weapons as a lever in the negotiations, not to fire them, but only as an asset, as I said several times.

At this point, we can say civilian society has recovered much of its power, its space and we are in a situation in which the government is very susceptible to political pressure. We no longer are in the situation we had at the start of the negotiations when the weight of the military factor, exerted by the Armed Forces, was too great. Now we have a totally different situation.

I believe that understanding and negotiation will prevail as the means to solve problems. I do not say that everything will be achieved without problems or resistance but I do believe that the weapons are now more of a problem, or undue wear, for the person who tries to use coercion as a mechanism to get results in the military field, which already is a closed chapter.

[Reporter] At one time, and you said it once already on this program, studies were being made to ensure certain mechanisms to guarantee stability and prevent a crisis within the process. I recall that it was said that aside from certain aspects related to topics dealing with arms destruction or the Armed Forces purge process, there were other sensitive points such as the transfer of land concerning the FMLN. Are these still sensitive points? Do these points still have the same level of sensitivity? Are they being solved?

[Villalobos] When I said there were technical problems that had been preceded by political problems in connection with the final phase of arms destruction, I was specifically referring to the need to make certain land transfer agreements, basically the higher value land, and this already has been solved. In other words, this point has been solved. This does not preclude the possibility that some senseless owner or someone from the government may foolishly try to recover certain lands, something that would be very antagonistic and provoke reactions that I would not describe as political but rather as local reactions by people who are firmly rooted to the land. This would cause a conflict. Since that agreement, however, the problems have been solved.

[Reporter] Despite questions that the problem might be solved for the leadership in certain areas but not for the fighters?

[Villalobos] No. What this is all about is that the problem was resolved precisely for the social grass roots and fighters. We are speaking about the transfer of the most expensive land, which was the most crucial point. The land of lesser value, such as Class 7 or Class 6 land, obviously some owners may even be happy to sell the land. The problem arises with permanently arable land such as coffee, sugar cane, and others. These land transfers were going to cause problems because obviously in certain cases these plots of land have very high resale value or even though the land may be in a bad state it may have good economic recovery possibilities. Obviously there was going to be greater pressure exerted on these plots of land, therefore we had to establish how this land would be transferred to guarantee that this part of the problem could be solved to ensure stability. We reached an agreement on this point, even for land that holds a potential for tourist exploitation, and this chapter at least has one more guarantee, aside from all the other agreements.

There is something that I believe is important to point out: The transfer of land is uniform. In other words, there are no differences made between commanders, leaders, or fighters. Instead, the land is mostly for the fighters and the grass roots that were with the FMLN during the war. On this topic some news reports have mentioned—basically EL DIARIO DE HOY—that there was a struggle between leaders and the rank and file, such as in the case of the Segundo Montes settlement. This is basically a conflict between small land owners. The area where the Segundo Montes settlement is located is land of little value. It is poor land and this is precisely the reason for the conflict. The problem is that there are people who left the area and left small plots and when the resettlement process took place no one asked whose land it was. In some cases the settlements took place on land owned by FMLN fighters or leaders. Now a very contentious situation has emerged but it is not as serious as reported, such as commanders taking land away from the fighters. That cannot be done. The way the land is transferred makes it impossible—the relationship between each land owner and the amount of land, the amount of credit—no way can it be done. [sentence as heard] This is something totally absurd. I say this is part of the propaganda war to try and run down the land transfer process, which is something that will give the country plenty of stability.

[Reporter] Something that one reads about, especially during times of transition—not only in the case of the FMLN but with the leftists in general and the changes that have taken place these past 50 years in the socialist world—that when new rules take effect the leadership ends up separating from the ambitions of the grass roots. I also read that news item in EL DIARIO DE HOY that commanders in the highest military leadership during the war were exerting pressure and taking over land that was intended for the grass roots as well as the fighters who had not been military cadres of a certain level during the war.

[Villalobos] That is completely impossible. The land transfer is in government hands, not the hands of the FMLN.

One essential element of ownership is the legal element. One top issue in our discussions with the government during the last phase of the negotiations was that of title deeds. Title deeds are in the name of people or of cooperatives. The members of cooperatives are people who exist, who are there, who can be seen, and who are not leaders of the FMLN. Land has not been transferred to FMLN leaders. What you have heard is untrue, absurd, impossible. I think that if the name of one single FMLN leader had appeared in a land transfer document it would have been the object of a big propaganda campaign. The FMLN has a political position on this.

One thing is important, though: the political and social meaning of this. I believe that it is necessary to continue to help the peasants after the land transfer process is completed because land transfer alone is not sufficient. If the current land transfer process, added to the 1980 transfer, fails to generate wealth, this country will be in deep trouble.

A successful land transfer process is a matter of national interest, not of FMLN interest alone.

This process is most important for maintaining a domestic market and also for the country's stability. This is why we view as an obligation promoting associations, technology, training, and managerial support for the land transfer process so that diversified production as well as quality and efficiency may be secured. I view this as the forthcoming phase of a commitment we must acquire with the peasants. It is not enough to tell them: Here is the land and now I am going to engage in politics. Just like that. We have to pay attention to the transfer of land, to turn this land into real economic power and to substantially improve the standard of living of the peasants.

[Reporter] A well-known expert on the agrarian problem in El Salvador has said that the land problem, which last year was linked to land ownership and to the land transfer process, will not be resolved simply by giving land to the peasants. He said that the peasants must join the economy on equal terms to prevent the unfair exchanges that have characterized exchanges between capitalist-type production and peasant-type production. The peasants must be trained and given marketing facilities and so on.

You have said there is a phase into which the country must move but are there the conditions? If conditions are not suitable, the process will have no stability.

[Villalobos] I think that if we make comparisons and consider the political framework, for example, the current land transfer process is moving quickly. Had it moved this way from the start of the cease-fire, the process would be almost over by now. The current political framework is different. It is difficult for me to believe that the Armed Forces would be willing to play its past role again—that of defending rich landowners—to prevent the land transfer. It is also difficult for me to believe there could exist a private enterprise sector that thinks land transfer is bad.

I think there is an awareness of the fact that this is a matter of national interest. I think the current political framework is not unfavorable to the peasants. I think the people have gained an awareness of this. It is being said that not only should the transfer take place but that assistance must follow this transfer, and this is being said not only by the FMLN. I know that other people who have different points of view are interested in this also.

There may be some mad people here and there who could believe that land transfers are not necessary and that people should be thrown out of farms, but I believe there is a general feeling that land transfer must take place. This will always be a conflictive issue though. This is the most difficult aspect left to resolve. We must now abide by the mechanisms of civil society, especially for one particular reason: Any attempt to use coercion would open the door to a reaction. I said this at a meeting with businessmen. This is not a matter of them approaching a peasant to tell him that he will not keep the land. This is a matter of highly organized peasants, of peasants who functioned at the highest and most complex expression of social struggle: war. Any attempt to hurt them would be like teasing a beehive. It would be very dangerous. I think that many sectors are aware of this.

I think most landowners want to transfer land and improve their economic situation, maximize their economic gains. I think this is fair and can sometimes delay the process. Generally speaking, however, I do think there will be a land transfer.

[Reporter] Let us discuss the FMLN possibilities for the 1994 elections and the political challenges it has assumed with the destruction of weapons. It has become a political party and now there are new game rules and ideological and political guidelines.

You delivered a speech at the Reconciliation in Transition Times conference. Salvadoran media and political analysts have analyzed certain parts. (ASI) Executive Director Roberto Ortiz Avalos appeared on this program on 10 February. He commented on a few points of your speech. Ortiz criticized your views strongly. His concerns have been echoed by certain right-wing sectors, more so the ideological right wing than the right wing represented in the Legislative Assembly. Ortiz claims the left wing is not ready to govern that, in fact, the left wing lacks a coherent position and that certain left-wing sectors issue contradictory statements and positions.

I asked Ortiz to describe the left wing. Is it the FMLN, the Democratic Convergence, or a much more cohesive program that could manage to gather all forces under the left wing? What do you think? Is the left wing really prepared to govern after 1994 or does it face serious internal problems that could give the impression there is

no single left wing but several left wings? In fact, you have a new way of thinking that is not accepted fully within the FMLN.

[Villalobos] Your question has two very interesting aspects: the problem of contradictions and the problem of whether the left wing is capable of governing. As for contradictions, we are experiencing an adjustment period. I would say the Nationalist Republican Alliance [Arena] has undergone the most extensive internal adjustments. The FMLN and Christian Democrats, however, have sent no one abroad. Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa was appointed to the foreign service. This is part of an adjustment process; there will be contradictions and regroupings. This is logical. This is part of the new reality, the new political scene. All forces are experiencing this.

[Villalobos continues] For example, the National Democratic Union, which is associated with the FMLN, has also made some adjustments. This is a new reality. The political scene will be much more dynamic now because there is a new atmosphere. Contradiction is not necessarily tantamount to division. I maintain that contradictions generate new ideas and proposals, as long as the goal is not to dwell on contradictions. This is a problem affecting most outspoken members of the left and right wing; that is, to always do things wrong and never to try to establish a national project or admit the opponent is right sometimes. This is one of the things we Salvadorans must learn in this new phase, a much more civilized phase of the political struggle.

The problem of contradictions is completely secondary. I think this is among the positive developments. Certain political forces will become weaker and others stronger, but those that try to have a more vertical chain of command, to be more coercive and less democratic, will obviously face greater problems. If factions within a political party cannot tolerate each other, they will be less likely to tolerate groups in society because there is a higher degree of plurality there than within a party. A party that is incapable of maintaining internal cohesion would hardly be able to reach an understanding with other parties.

I would say two extreme visions exist that are somewhat damaging. If you asked someone on the extreme right whether the extreme left should exist, he would answer: Yes, I do not mind their having a few decorative deputies. This was described at one time by Ruben Zamora as the bonsai left wing. In other words, put them there and you can claim you are a democrat because the opponent holds seats.

As for the most extreme left, some people think: Yes, we must accept pluralism, but part of the opposition should survive and play a decorative role to give the impression of democracy.

Some on the extreme left, including the FMLN forces that took up arms, as individuals or groups, have somewhat more radical ideas. That is quite obvious. The issue is what is the tolerance level, in democratic terms, toward striking a balance of forces, which is the nature of democracy; that is, of course, accepting the existence of a strong opponent. The problem is not to get rid of the other party but to evaluate the strength of the projects.

As for the other aspect, the one not having to do with contradictions but with the ability to govern, the country has only had the chance to see the right wing govern. I would even point out something right-wing analysts forget at times: They have suffered an adjustment process. They got rid of the National Conciliation Party [PCN], the military party, and replaced it with Arena. Only remnants of the PCN exist now. It has been forgotten. This is a phase the right wing is going through; that is, the military right wing.

We saw another party emerge, Arena, which was very radical. The present Arena has different internal factions. A new right wing and a new left wing are emerging. This implies that certain contradictions will arise. This involves political chemistry. It is natural, inherent to this experience.

We have had right-wing governments. The opposition has not been allowed to govern. When people comment on my statements, they say they do not believe me, but the facts prove otherwise.

The facts are clear and these are the peace agreements. The left wing has shown it can govern, because it has practically cogoverned in this country [words indistinct]. The peace agreements established measures in the Legislative and Executive Branches as well as changes in the judicial branch and in the economic and social systems, all of which project the program the left wants for this country. We must also bear in mind that 99.99 percent of the proposals made at the negotiating table were presented by the FMLN, not by the government. We presented the proposals to reform the Constitution, the military, the police, and the land transfer proposal. We presented all of those reforms and that is equivalent to governing a country.

These changes were made by a formal government supported by a political group that agreed to promote these changes. Now, I must admit, and it is recorded in history, that President Cristiani played a special role. Nonetheless, it cannot be said that we do not know how to rule. In fact, we have ruled in an indirect manner. I want to point out one last element with regard to our capacity to govern. We were at war, and we created a situation of dual power in the conflict zones. We took care of health, education, public security, and production problems in the midst of war. That gave us important experience.

The left wing in this country has a democratic capacity for preparing a political project and the qualities needed to rule a country. We are aware that there is a need for greater cohesion with regard to a project for modernizing and renewing the left, and I support that. The right wing is not going to remain inactive, but the problem does not

lie with these radicals of the extreme right. I think they are on their way to becoming a thing of the past. The right wing is undergoing a process of change, and that is good for the country. Our political enemies think this is important, so the radicals on the left will develop an awareness that the enemy is renewing itself. One thing is clear now: The country is changing; it is going to change.

Who are going to be the main actors; what is going to be their relationship in the next stage? That is yet to be determined. He who renews himself, who changes more quickly, who understands the nation's problems, is he who will play an important role in the new situation.

[Reporter] I find it interesting when you say that in one way or another the FMLN has cogoverned inasmuch as it presented 99 percent of the proposals included in the peace agreements and designed and implemented popular organizations in the conflict zones. Then, from your point of view, it is the FMLN, within the left wing, that developed this form of cogovernment. What about the Democratic Convergence [CD]?

[Villalobos] I think you have the right idea. I feel that when we say we have the capacity to govern we are talking about the FMLN, because it was at war.

I am even sure that one of the rightists' points of attack in the electoral campaign will be this: We can govern, the opposition cannot. But, generally speaking, the opposition began a joint effort, directly after the Revolutionary Democratic Front came into existence and indirectly after the CD came into being, to use its political means at the Legislative Assembly. CD's role in the Assembly and its influence at the international level were decisive. I am not speaking of the war, but of a broader view where a number of political forces play a decisive role, some of them directly and others indirectly.

This is the chance for all intellectuals who do not believe in a rightist solution for this country to offer their solution. This happened because the FMLN assumed a more modest position, so to speak, regarding its own broader role. In this country many more people believe in a national solution. As far as doctrine is concerned, these people could even be regarded by radicals as adversaries. But I don't think so. I think they are part of a national project. This is a very important stage in the country's history. It is similar to our founding the country again. It is like a civil war in which it is difficult to distinguish political or ideological borders because these borders are somewhat diluted. The proximity of the elections makes it necessary to be more emphatic. I used to speak of the danger of putting on the electoral sweater too soon.

For instance, the crime problem must be regarded from a national viewpoint. The leftists could say the Armed Forces people have become thieves, while the rightists could accuse the FMLN of the same thing. We are dealing with a postwar social phenomenon that must be taken care of, keeping the national interest in mind.

The government has to create this harmony. It should not adopt measures that would place it in conflict with other political forces but rather it should adopt problem-solving measures. After all, the crime problem is negatively affecting everybody. This problem must be faced socially and legally. It must be faced in every field. This is a new situation. There should be no confusion on this. We should not blame each other for the problem. It is logical that this would happen at the end of the war.

I believe that the idea is to draft a national program and to work so that elections run as smoothly as possible. I repeat: The opposition, as a whole, is prepared to govern. I think that is something on which the opposition can campaign. Of course, the opposition knows how to govern.

[Reporter] You mentioned earlier that in this process for the creation or renewal of political and ideological positions, forces that do not meet current demands and that do not renew themselves could find themselves left out, with no election possibility. I say this because you finished your news conference by saying that those who signed the peace agreements and who are now defending national interest are exposed, just like I am. I am citing what you said in a letter I read, at being called traitors. You concluded by saying: Perhaps extremists on both sides are correct because defending the fatherland and the interests of the nation means betraying ideological sectarianism and fanaticism. Such a position does not necessarily enjoy full agreement within the FMLN, especially not within the FMLN leadership. The 1994 elections, whether we like it, are a key point for differentiating positions. How able will the FMLN, or FMLN sectors, be to adapt themselves to the new times and to the changes that must take place?

[Villalobos] I will speak based on facts. The FMLN went through a leftist experience during the most complex period in Nicaragua's history. We were rebels at a time when most Latin American guerrilla movements were being defeated. It was a complex time when the Reagan administration's neoliberal policies were gaining strength and socialism was crumbling. We survived it all, demonstrating that the FMLN's internal political pact is both mature and flexible. There were times when it could have been said that the FMLN was militarily defeated, that it had no future. The FMLN was capable of making necessary changes, however. This happened in the political field also.

The internal debates we used to have, which I described as fourth order debates in reference to the strength that characterized them, were strong and helped prepare the FMLN for this phase.

In the text I point out that the FMLN had to conduct several negotiations simultaneously. First, the FMLN had to negotiate with its rank and file, which includes all kinds of people. Second, it had to conduct internal negotiations among its various forces. It also had to make certain pacts with social forces that were also

political components of the process. And finally, it had to negotiate with the government, whose positions varied because some of its representatives were hard-liners while others were more inclined to reach agreements. The future of this country depends on the ability to make pacts, alliances, and agreements. This depends on how realistic negotiators are.

In my opinion it is possible to (?move toward the left) to dispute the big void that exists in this country's political core. This is what the struggle is about. The conditions do not exist for the people of this country to support sensationalist speeches that respond to extremes. I do not believe that we should respond to everything aggressively. Anyone who promotes that type of program will pay a political price. The people want to hear thoughts, arguments, and solutions. They want to be able to set forth proposals to deal with this country's biggest problems, which at present are basically economic and social.

[Reporter] You have gone back to the FMLN's experience during the war when conditions were totally different from the conditions we are now experiencing. You have even admitted on other occasions that somehow the type of organization that the FMLN was—its centralized, vertical decisions resulting from the demands of the war—allowed discussions to be held without the FMLN losing its cohesiveness. Being subversives helped you overcome your differences in deference to a common cause.

How clear are the common objectives at this time? We are no longer at war. The FMLN is no longer armed. Now there is a more favorable climate for a public demonstration. These sorts of things were never done publicly before. The only things that are brought to light nowadays are differences. We tend to discuss these differences more openly than before. Some even prefer to conceal or disguise their differences. I am referring to the fact that under these new circumstances two things could take place. First, we can either not overcome the state of accommodation, which would cause the FMLN to weaken; secondly, decisions such as the one you have just mentioned would remain outside the realm of the FMLN.

[Villalobos] Correct. What you have just described is the challenge we face. In other words, I agree with part of what you have just mentioned. I agree not in negative terms but in positive terms. The efforts we are trying to carry out under present circumstances are directed at how to accomplish an understanding or fill that political vacuum as an element that will bring about changes. If the issues I previously mentioned were analyzed under war conditions, the challenge would be outlined in the capacity to conduct the process, elaborate ideas as well as to obtain consensus. Now, under the new conditions the issue lies in obtaining a consensus under a more complex framework. In a certain way, war conditions provided an advantageous conditions for a consensus. Under current conditions the continuity of the process and establishing a correlation is one of the issues that motivates the FMLN, however. Things are not accomplished only through goodwill. Much depends on the conditions at the time. In this case, the FMLN represents a sound investment. It would be a serious mistake to withdraw from the party at this stage. In this respect, I believe that the internal debate we are having is also taking place with the right; we either all agree or we all disagree. The other alternative is somewhat suicidal. I do not see the situation as disastrous as some tend to see it. The important issue at this stage lies in the ability to prepare proposals, which is why this debate is so fundamental. The right also has its own debate. You have had spokesmen of the ideological right, as you have called them in this program. They clearly attack and criticize certain opinions inside the right renovation process. These spokesman have also made calls to adopt more ideological positions. If only they were to listen to these calls. I normally advise not to pay much attention to the more ideological opinions and that it is necessary to adopt a more pragmatic and flexible stance. The main issue lies in the adversaries' political ability to adapt to the new conditions. The ability to tolerate is fundamental to the various parties in determining the degree of assimilating democracy as a basic political concept.

[Reporter] You also pointed out the need to have a purpose in light of all our national problems, which are fundamentally economic and social problems. In one of my previous questions at the beginning of the interview, when I mentioned certain contradictions, I was not only mentioning contradictions that could take place within the left as result of internal readjustment. I was mentioning contradictions with respect to how the proposals are being laid out. The proposals that are being made brings to mind what ASI [Association of the Industrial Sector] member Roberto Ortiz Avalos pointed out on 10 February. He said that it is contradictory that the left, as it relates to the debate that has risen with respect to the general preferential system [sistema generalizado de preferencias], should be looking to wipe out poverty and propitiates an inflation level that would only lead to a fall in exports. Without an increase in exports there is no sustained growth, and without sustained growth it is impossible to combat poverty. It is also contradictory that there are calls for wage increases of up to 500 colones and calls for wage freezing. That is the level of contradiction Mr. Ortiz Avalos was referring to when he said that the proposal the left is making at this time do not solve the problems that they supposedly seek to solve.

[Villalobos] I believe the problem lies in that since the left is the new element in this relationship, emphasis is being place on what it does. In the case of the right or the government, I could mention three or four examples where the policies implemented are loaded with serious contradictions. I say the government because the right is the government. I could mention the case of the electoral code and even other examples, but with respect to the left, the problem is that it is going through a process of public deliberation. There is also the case, as you stated, with respect to the existent relation between the social situation, the union movement, and our relationship with the United States from the economic point of view.

I think this is something that could....[pauses] that should have been done by [words indistinct]. This is my opinion. Why? Because, the problem is that in the United States there is a current feeling favoring leaving-....[pauses] taking El Salvador out of this preferential framework. This does not only refer to the Preferential Tariff System; rather, it is a somewhat broader scheme. The United States has very large commitments here although this U.S. Administration has said it is more interested in attending its own internal problems. Therefore, what we have to do here is muster up national unity—I said this on a previous occasion—to assure U.S. relations with El Salvador. This is a negotiating tool that can be used to achieve an internal agreement in the political field. Otherwise, we run the risk that in 1994 this country will be ungovernable; if all the immigrants are returned, if they cut off economic aid and if, on top of that, other measures are taken regarding the Preferential Tariff System. This would lead to a very complicated situation. A strategy would have to be set up not to win the elections because who would want to rule a totally economically chaotic nation where the immigrants represent the prime source of income.

This is how things stand, but I believe something positive can come out of this. We are experiencing an adaptation period; so I do not see this situation so bleak. Of course, if I start talking about the contradictions of the right wing regarding what they are doing, we would then reach the conclusion that they are not capable of governing either. This would not be an outright truth.

[Reporter] The capacity they [the right wing] have developed can be considered positive. To say for example that the right wing is not even....[pauses] or that there are contradictions in the right wing's positions is a form of recognition that during all this time there have been government programs, there have been economic and social programs [words indistinct] limitations and contradictions [word indistinct]. Nevertheless, this is no excuse for the left wing not to develop the capacity to....

[Villalobos, interrupting] I am looking at the facts. In my opinion, right now it is too early to demand that we be ready to make proposals for the next stage. I am looking at the facts. We presented practically all the proposals at the negotiations; we also insisted that they be met, and they were. [words indistinct] a sector of the government, even a sector of the Armed forces accepted those agreements. They accepted them as part of the changes that had to take place in this country. We acknowledge that they have an important role to play in this process, but we were the ones who made the proposals. This demonstrates that we have the capability to make proposals. We ensured that the peace process took shape. With the participation of the international community and of the diverse political forces of this nation, a high percentage of the agreements were fulfilled. The truth is that we are living in a new nation. The new nation is debuting. The next step is the electoral process. At this time the problems that have been lagging behind will be debated. The first problem that had to be solved in this country was peace. To achieve this peace, we made a good proposal that totally changed this nation. Now we have to solve the credit problem, the tax policy problem, the social problem, the problem of the state's role, and an array of [word indistinct] on which this government applied neoliberal policies in a dogmatic fashion. It is a fact that the hospitals are not bankrupt due to the war. They are bankrupt because they were badly administered by this government. The state's social role was [word indistinct]. Currently, there will be an attempt to implement an electoral [word indistinct] on the social problems. I do not think that this will be very successful. These issues will be widely debated. Now will be the time to....[pauses] we were occupied with war but now peace has produced a new nation. The greatest changes in this nation's history came about as a result of our proposals; therefore, we have to be given some time [preceding word in English], and I believe that in the short term we will make a proposal to the nation on economic and social matters. They will be very dramatic proposals that will look for national consensus, that will look for national agreements to support these crucial issues: tax policy, credits, democratization of the financial system, and the problem of the state's social role regarding education and health. These issues are very important. They are the core of the next stage. Nevertheless, we need some time to work on this.

[Reporter] [words indistinct] internal debate within the left wing. Maybe this explains why at times certain personalities who are invited to make proposals do not accept. This could be because they might not have debated enough issues to make proposals that could politically burn them out before the 1994 elections. There is something I am very curious about. I want to pose this question. When one thinks about elections, one does not only think about programs or that an agenda of priorities must be established or what is the position of the left or what are the left-wing proposals regarding certain problems. There are also political figures. Certain political personalities have started to appear on the scene. The National Revolutionary Movement has presented its presidential candidate, Victor Valles. What does this mean? Is the left going to present one candidate or are there going to be several?

[Villalobos] We must go back to what I said previously. Within this new framework, the fact that a new party has been created a few days ago, the fact that political interests will be expressed much stronger is a positive not a negative fact. There is the capacity to form groups and negotiate after the forces express and manifest themselves. For example, it is difficult to negotiate if the political strength is not clear. If you do not know how much you are worth, it is difficult to negotiate.

The government would have never heeded our demands for negotiations if these demands had not been backed by a guerrilla army. The government would have never considered us. The groups will evidently state their views, arguments, programs, and political choices at this phase. Then they will proceed to comprise new groups.

This will be a test for the opposition and right wing groups, which must prove their capability to renew themselves and make the most logical pacts possible by choosing the most adequate people and platforms. What is currently taking place is not definite. One cannot consider the National Revolutionary Movement [MNR] case as definite. The MNR members said they would strive for a consensus. They are simply establishing their position in politics.

[Reporter] They issued a letter saying they will seek a consensus. Who knows? Maybe the consensus will be based on their choice for candidate. Does the FMLN have its own ace in the hole, for example, former FMLN commanders? You, for example, are a likely candidate. Right?

[Villalobos] I am more inclined toward the idea of a consensus and national platform. I do not think the problem revolves around the candidates.

[Reporter] No, but they are essential.

[Villalobos] The candidates represent a conclusion. They do not represent the first phase. That would be an imposition. I think the crux of the matter is the order in which things are done and the achievement of a consensus concerning the way things must be done. We must not forget therein lies Arena's weakness. We must not forget the achievement of peace gave dividends to Arena and the opposition, particularly to the FMLN.

Under the new conditions, candidates could disintegrate or destroy a political platform the country needs depending on the way in which a consensus is reached. I believe the logical thing would be to reach a consensus, establish pacts, and create a strategy around a political platform. This might make it easier to reach an agreement on the candidate.

I believe we must seek candidates who better guarantee a national consensus. Political groups will probably use their leaders in the first phase, but there is a second round, when the elections are near. It will be necessary to think about another type of person. We will see.

[Reporter] We have taken a bit more time in the interview but all the topics in the agenda cannot be discussed in a short amount of time. We thank you for your being here this morning. Thank you for your time.

[Villalobos] Thank you for inviting me here.

Guatemala

Serrano 'Happy' With International Support

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[Text] The international community's support for President Jorge Serrano's peace efforts was apparent during the president's trip to Venezuela and Ecuador. This support implies the opening of a new phase for the peace negotiations, because the backing from friendly countries will be bigger, more effective, solid, and emphatic to secure the country's stability and pacification.

The chief of state made this statement at a news conference he held at the airport in Guatemala City on his return. He said he is happy with the international support he has received, which was expressed by the formation of a support committee composed of Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Spain.

Serrano said the international community has a very positive understanding of the efforts being made to secure peace. It also understands, Serrano said, that the obstacles and new conditions the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity [URNG] wants to impose are excuses for not searching for a solution to the armed conflict.

President Serrano strongly condemned the threats issued against Christian Democratic leaders and Edmond Mulet, a moderate leader, for having talked with the guerrillas. Serrano said he knows about this meeting because Alfonso Cabrera, secretary general of the Christian Democratic Party, who headed the parties' talks with the URNG, informed him of it.

Afterward, during an informal chat with reporters, Serrano said he regrets the speculation regarding the meeting. In his opinion, there was ill will on the part of the source that leaked the information, who made references to issues that were never discussed, such as the Army reduction and purge.

Serrano expressed his sadness regarding threats made against politicians and the explosions at the Guatemalan Christian Democracy and the Solidarity Action Movement party headquarters. Serrano said that these acts are perpetrated by terrorists and cowards who attempt to generate a climate of instability.

Serrano said he does not know who is responsible for these acts. If he did, he said he would ask them to come out in the open and express their opinions publicly, form political parties, and legally and democratically participate in the elections.

Serrano also said no decision has been made on whether he will travel to Belize to participate in the drug summit, as legal and political aspects still must be considered.

Serrano said he does not believe he needs congressional approval to participate in the summit. He has already made his opinion known to the deputies in an official communique, but Serrano said he wants to hear the diverse opinions that came up during the Legislative Assembly debate, during which he did not receive majority approval for his trip to Belize.

Serrano said that soon he will travel to Nicaragua to express to President Violeta Chamorro Guatemala's solidarity with that nation, which is struggling between poverty in a ruined economy and the aftermath of a bloody internal war.

To conclude, Serrano said that the presidents of Central America, Venezuela, and Ecuador sent U.S. President Bill Clinton a letter in which they requested the release of $100 million to prop up the Nicaraguan economy.

Downed Power Pylons Cause Blackout in Southeast

PA1602161993 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1534 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] Guatemala City, 16 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—Police sources confirmed on 16 February that two power pylons in southeastern Guatemala were blown up with dynamite on 15 February by unidentified individuals, causing a blackout in the capital city and in a large part of the interior.

According to reports, the two pylons, which provide power to central Guatemala, were downed by strong explosions in Cuilapa Municipality, Santa Rosa, and in Escuintla.

These attacks took place eight days prior to the resumption of peace talks between the government and guerrillas slated for 23 February in Mexico.

Search for Perpetrators 'Unsuccessful'

PA1602220093 Guatemala City SIGLO VEINTIUNO in Spanish 16 Feb 93 p 3

[Text] Power pylons in the vicinity of the Aguacapa hydroelectric plant were destroyed on the evening of 15 February. Consequently, several sections of the capital city and Sacatepequez and Escuintla Departments were affected by outages.

Technicians from the power company and the National Institute of Electrification (INDE) said the Aguacapa hydroelectric plant is part of an independent system that supplies power to the central part of the country, as well as Escuintla and Sacatepequez Departments.

The technicians said that the location of the sabotage is unknown but they assume that it was within the jurisdiction of Taxisco or Guazacapan Municipalities in Santa Rosa, approximately 70 km from the capital.

Technicians from the power company and INDE also said that they are evaluating the situation and early on 16 February will search the affected areas with helicopters and on land to determine the location of the affected pylons.

Our sources said that it is presumed there were two acts of sabotage but this information will be confirmed on 16 February when the necessary inspections have been carried out.

As a consequence of the alleged sabotage, power may be rationed over the next few hours until necessary repairs are completed.

A separate report states that the search by Army troops for the terrorists who perpetrated the sabotage was unsuccessful.

Honduras

Callejas on Trip Abroad, Domestic Issues

PA1602221093 Tegucigalpa Voz de Honduras Network in Spanish 1742 GMT 15 Feb 93

[News conference by President Rafael Leonardo Callejas at the Government House Press Room in Tegucigalpa with local reporters and an unidentified announcer—live]

[Excerpts] [Callejas] Good day. Before beginning the questions, I would like to speak about the results of the trip I made, first to Guayaquil, Ecuador, and then to Caracas, Venezuela.

The first trip was in connection with the important and complex topic of bananas. Accepting an invitation from the Ecuadoran president, the presidents of Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and the Mexican deputy secretary of agriculture and the Venezuelan development minister, met in Guayaquil.

During my trip, I was accompanied by the economy minister and union leaders Mauro Gonzalez of the Unified Union of Standard Fruit Company Workers [Sutrasfco], Rene Ayestas of the Trade Union of Tela Railroad Company Workers [Sitraterco], Alejandro Flores of the Sitraterco, and another union member of the Sitraterco executive committee.

The resolutions were very favorable regarding Latin American solidarity. As you all know, however, the EEC Council of Agriculture Ministers, in spite of the negative votes from Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands, approved a resolution that implies very negative repercussions for banana cultivation in Latin America and, of course, our country. We are really very sorry the EEC has made this decision because it will have serious consequences for Latin America. For our country the repercussions are particularly serious.

At the forum to promote economic and social joint efforts, we spoke with the Tela Railroad Company and Chiquita. We invited the Standard Fruit Company and the unions to form a special tripartite commission made up of the banana workers; management, including independent banana growers; and the government. This commission will establish a short, medium, and long-term strategy for this important Honduran industry.

Then we went to Caracas where, I am pleased to report, we reached very favorable agreements with Colombia and Venezuela, agreements that will also be signed with Mexico to establish a free trade zone in the terms established in the agreements and in line with the laws of the respective countries.

It is also important to note that Mexico decided to reduce tariffs in its multilateral and bilateral agreements. These tariffs will be set at the lowest levels between each Central American country and Mexico. For Honduras, this involves an average drop from 17 to 9 percent for tariffs on almost all Honduran exports to Mexico.

This Mexican decision was applied to all Central American countries. Mexico also granted two big lines of credit.

Mexico explained the enormous difficulty it has with certain aspects of its tariffs. It mentioned the hike from 12 to 25 percent it had to establish to protect its cattle industry. This regulation was applied to beef imports from everywhere in the world, including those from Central American countries.

As a way to compensate for this in the short term, the Mexican Government assigned a credit line with a preferential rate set at the Libor rate plus 3 percent. This will allow banana exporters to receive five-year financing and the difference in interest rates will make up somehow for the tariffs beef exporters have to pay. This difference can be transferred to the cattle sector to help maintain internal prices.

The natural resources minister will have to analyze this credit line to begin implementing it as soon as possible. Moreover, there will a new $100 million financing for infrastructure, of which the Honduran Government will use $20 million. We already instructed the minister of communications, public works and transportation to spend this money on priority projects. This was in sum the result of my trip to Guayaquil and Caracas.

I returned on the evening of 12 February because of scheduling problems, and thus delayed my trip to Islas de la Bahia, where on 14 February I inaugurated three important projects: a secondary school, the purchase of land for Roatan families, and the mayoralty of Roatan Municipality.

[Announcer] The president of the Republic has just given some explanations....

[Callejas, in progress] ...Alonso Valenzuela, of the Honduran Social Investment Fund [FI], will later give a brief report on the scope of FI from January 1990 to January 1993. Mario Nuncio will answer any questions on coffee and its problems, and Jacobo Hernandez Cruz will answer any other questions.

[Announcer] The question and answer period will start now. Gustavo Rubi will ask the first question. We are transmitting this news conference from the Presidency.

[Rubi] Mr. President, this attitude by the EEC economy ministers....

[Callejas, interrupting] You mean agriculture ministers.

[Rubi] Yes, agriculture. Honduras would be hurt the most by this, simply because it lacks industry and food production. This contradicts your claim that we are starting a development process. Coffee and shrimp prices are also down.

[Callejas] The EEC resolution affects all Latin American producers. It affects some more than others, but it has caused economic damage to all of them. Only 12 percent of our exports go to Europe; Costa Rica exports 48 percent to Europe. As a result of this problem, surplus bananas will be shipped to the U.S. market, where the rate of consumption is increasing by only 2 percent. This implies prices will drop in the U.S. market and the banana industries of only those countries meeting two basic conditions, low cost and high quality, will survive. Honduras must prepare to achieve this and, for this purpose, we have already created the appropriate forum.

This affects us. The prices of coffee and other products are the lowest this century. That is the current price situation for our products. They are at the lowest prices of the century. Despite this, the Honduran economy will register a higher growth rate in 1993 than the 4.5 percent growth rate registered in 1992. We hope it will be 5 to 6 percent this year. Nontraditional exports have increased by 40 percent and there is an upward trend.

There will be, nevertheless, a very serious impact. If it were not for low banana and coffee prices, the Honduran economy would have grown in 1992 by more than 7 percent and in 1993 by more than 9 percent. Low banana and coffee prices have prevented additional growth of about 3 percent. This is the cost of low prices for our main export products.

[Announcer] Rafael Castellano Souza is next.

[Souza] [words indistinct] that these efforts made by the Latin American presidents in Ecuador have been in vain, if we take into consideration the stand adopted by the EEC agriculture ministers? Also, is it true that you obtained 100 million lempiras from the Mexican Government that will be invested in improving the roads in Tegucigalpa?

[Callejas] The banana situation is very serious, so the banana producing countries decided to go through the GATT to see if the decision may be declared out of line with GATT regulations. Those decisions are in the works, and we have made some progress. It is very difficult to receive a favorable reply from the EEC because, even though the quota rose from 1.4 billion tons to 2 billion tons, the fact is that exports in 1992 amounted to 2.4 billion tons. In other words, all of these factors—the quotas and the granting of licenses—have an effect that is contrary to the Latin American position.

We received $20 million in financing from Mexico as part of an overall program of $100 million [currency as heard]. We have discussed this with the Secretariat of Communications, Public Works, and Transportation, which will present me a report on the best ways to immediately invest these funds. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] German Reyes of ACAN-EFE.

[Reyes] Mr. President, I would like to know the outlook for the new relationship between Central America and Europe following the announced measures regarding bananas and for the upcoming ministers meeting, San Jose IX, to be held in March in San Salvador.

[Callejas] In Guayaquil, we formed a high-level commission that points out, among other things, the need for fair relations among our states. This commission will have to study the scope of the EEC resolution and suggest the appropriate actions, some of which are legal—such as the GATT—while others will be subject to my proposals. Inasmuch as the resolution was issued after we held our meeting, we will wait for this high-level commission to be formed in order to proceed according to what we established.

[Announcer] Armando Villanueva, from EL HERALDO.

[Villanueva] Mr. President, while you were abroad, the issue of bank interest was discussed in Tegucigalpa. The industrialists claim this interest is very high and hinders investment, while the bankers say we must first produce the reserves to cover the obligations. The low interest paid in countries such as the United States and sometimes in Central America [words indistinct]. Mr. President, could you comment on the problems that have arisen in San Pedro Sula over the death of businessman (Eduardo Villamil)?

[Callejas] The interest rates are free in the market. The decision to lower bank reserves is complicated. The Central Bank president has referred to this topic. I only want to add the following: We feel that there are two factors to consider in the interest rates. One of them naturally concerns the interests of investors, the businessmen who want a reduction of interest rates to be more competitive. We admit that this is most important, and we are working on that. You will recall that the Central Bank has in 1993 already reduced the reserve rates by 1 percent. It has been lowered from 35 percent to 34 percent. In other words, there is a trend to this effect, as long as this trend does not entail an excess of liquidity that will have an impact on our currency and affect the inflation rate.

The Central Bank then has to maintain the monetary policy with views to stability and inflation control. In the second place, the people with savings accounts today are receiving high interest rates for their savings to such a point that, as you all know, savings deposits have increased considerably in the country.

When interest rates fall quickly, this also affects those with savings accounts. In order to grow, the economy needs to have equal amounts of savings plus investments. We must save, and to save we must motivate the people to save. The market will have to provide this balance. Even though the government wants to participate in the financial market through bonds with 12, 14, and 16 percent interest rates, the fact is that we believe that the increase of liquidity and correct decisions by the Central Bank to reduce the reserves gradually and slowly will eventually allow interest rates to reach a balance that will satisfy those with savings deposits and the customers who request financing for investments. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] German Reyes of ACAN-EFE will ask a question now. No, he is turning down the opportunity. Another reporter will ask a question.

[Unidentified reporter] Mr. President, the U.S. State Department report on the human rights situation in Honduras has caused bad feelings among several groups. You stated previously the report contains a certain amount of accurate information. Is the situation really so serious as to continue to consider it a tragedy in the country?

[Callejas] [words indistinct] rights of a citizen is a serious problem in any country. The human rights situation has, however, changed a great deal. I have the last 14 U.S. State Department human rights reports. When they are compared it is evident that, although the problem continues, there has been improvement in the field.

The most important advancement is, perhaps, that it is no longer state policy to promote disappearances and human rights violations to avoid ideological pluralism in the country. The policy had very serious implications for our citizens. The main human rights violation at present is abuse of authority. However, according to the reports-....[pauses] It would, perhaps, be worthwhile for journalists to study the AID human rights reports on Honduras for the past 14 years. It will give you important information on the matter so you can reach your own conclusions and, perhaps, report them to the Honduran people. You will see how the government stance on human rights has improved during this time span. I repeat that the violation of the rights of one person is a problem for any country, including ours.

[Announcer] German Reyes is asking a question now.

[Reyes] In regard to your last statement, Mr. President, I do not see a big difference with regard to the country's human rights situation. In the past, people simply disappeared. Today they are murdered and the crime goes unpunished.

[Callejas] [words indistinct] you do know there is a big difference because, in the past, actions were prompted by a national security policy geared toward eliminating the government's opponents. Conflicting forces of the east and west, as well as irregular counterrevolutionary forces, were in the country. It seems to me that you would not be fair if you did not admit that, although there are still human rights violations, the state no longer persecutes political leaders because of ideological differences. It is one thing to have a state sponsored national security policy and quite another to have actions carried

out by individuals. Currently the state does not have a national security policy to thwart or limit ideological pluralism.

Perhaps the best example is that we brought back to the country all the people who, because of conflicts with the government and for political reasons, had to leave or request asylum in another country. Honduran society has indeed changed a great deal in this respect. Nobody is persecuted for his thoughts. Quite the contrary. Pluralism is now allowed in this country. There is, thus, a very big difference in the Honduran Government attitude regarding respect for citizen rights. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] Pedro Miguel Lopez has the next question.

[Lopez] Perhaps I heard wrong, but it seems to me you admitted a few minutes ago, answering the question by German Reyes, that prior to your government people were killed for security reasons. That is what you hinted, and I am not really sure that is what you said. If it is so, imagine what all those listening to the news conference will think when they hear the president hinting that people were killed in the past for national security reasons. You say this is not happening in your administration. Can you explain, please?

[Callejas] I am glad to. You may recall very well the reasons for that, since different unconventional and counterrevolutionary forces were in the country. That entailed the disappearance and death of people who had ideological disagreements.... [pauses] Complaints were filed on the matter. The state, the Honduran state, has undergone a major change in that respect. The thinking that prevails now supports human rights in general terms.

No disappearances have occurred during my administration. No actions that may bring on the condemnation of the government, as Honduras was condemned in the past for neglecting.... [pauses] The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights condemned the government because it neglected to pay attention to the problems that were brought before the court. We have experienced a radical change. That is why I am suggesting to newsmen that it would be worthwhile to go back and review the U.S. State Department reports on missing people and human rights.

[Announcer] Next is Gustavo Ruiz.

[Ruiz] Mr. Callejas, National Congress President Rodolfo Irias Navas said, referring to the U.S. State Department, that some ambassadors meddled in the country's internal affairs. On one occasion, the U.S. ambassador said justice was not respected or enforced, and that the law only bit those going without shoes not those wearing boots. I also want to ask: do you think you are taking care of social aspects with the help of the Inter-American Development Bank [IADB] alone? Do you think all the IADB millions being spent are yielding results, or is this just government propaganda?

[Callejas] This is part of an overall process to provide solutions to social problems. I mentioned at length different programs that go from housing to [11-second break in reception] indeed, we are taking care of the country's social problems. Figures in that respect are very clear. Recognizing the high levels of poverty that exist in the country, the solutions and actions, which may or may not resolve for a long time the problem of poverty in Honduras, will certainly help us move in that direction.

I have not heard the statements by the president of Congress, but I do want to say our relations with all the ambassadors are excellent. No ambassador is meddling in our internal affairs in my administration, although some may interpret it that way because we meet with some ambassadors. If there is some meddling, and we feel this counters our own decisions as government, we invite the ambassadors to the Foreign Ministry to give them our viewpoint.

[Unidentified reporter] You said your government respects human rights. So far, however, the people have not received a clear solution to the problem of the missing people. Although this happened in previous administrations, yours has the responsibility for solving this problem. Where are they, did they die, what really happened to them?

[Callejas] I explained to (?Amado Lopez) that the country was condemned in many cases because it failed to solve this problem. That prompted us to create the Human Rights Commission [Comisionado de los Derechos Humanos], with its representatives proposed by the National Reconciliation Commission. They have the responsibility of keeping the courts of justice active. They must strive to respond to the legitimate demands of the relatives of those missing since the past decade to know what happened. They must provide information on the murder cases in the country. This applies to the case of the president of the National Enterprise for Electric Power Workers Union of San Pedro Sula, who was killed with impunity. We believe that this politically motivated murder was perpetrated by groups that do not accept changes in the country. That is a fact.

What is being done? In the case, for example, of Landaverde and Pavon, the human rights commissioner already summoned certain people for questioning. These people had been mentioned in documents presented in the courts in San Pedro Sula.

I was also referring to that. The government does recognize that there are human rights abuses, but there is also a willingness to overcome this problem. This is contrary to what occurred in the past when there was no judicial response to these actions.

For this reason, we say that there has been progress with regard to the human right issue. Undoubtedly one of the most determinant factors is that the Armed Forces have discharged, turned over to the courts, or taken action in the cases against soldiers, noncommissioned officers, or

officers accused of violations. Sometimes we do not report this or do not allow others to appreciate what we are doing in this regard.

This is very important because a series of aspects have gone unnoticed. I did not know this was going to be a question but I will be glad to bring information about all those who have been discharged and turned over to courts as a result of accusations so that they can be tried in civilian courts.

There are cases that perhaps remain unsolved but actions have been taken to solve them.

[Announcer] We will now hear Rosa Marazon of LA PRENSA.

[Marazon] Had you been president when the national security policy was in force, what would you have done in the face of people who were disappearing and the continuous human rights violations?

[Callejas] This would be a supposition of the past. My stand as presidential candidate was very clear. I said that my government would take all pertinent steps to turn over to the courts all those accused of abuse of power and violating citizens' rights. As I told the human rights commissioner, the important thing is that the action should not be limited to reporting a violation. It is not enough to proceed judicially. There must be evidence to take actions in the courts.

When accusations have been made, for example the death of Pina Van Tuyl, the businessman, the Honduran Human Rights Defense Committee gave a report and the government was receptive to that. The people accused in that case were taken to court. They had to go to the judge to give testimony so that he could decide if there was a case, depending on the evidence presented.

Simply, a report of a crime is not a reason for a judicial action. This is what we want to state clearly to all. If there is a group in the nation that has the evidence to make a formal accusation, then let us know because we will proceed. That is why we have the human rights commissioner.

This is a grave problem. I reiterate that my position remains the same as when I was a candidate. I charged that there were serious violations in which the governments, either by action or omission, did not act in accordance with the best interests of society. They had to take many people, who were reported to court. This resulted in the condemnation of Honduras for human rights violations committed during the 1980's.

Thus, my government is taking steps to find answers. The answer might not necessarily lead to a conviction, because evidence must be taken into consideration. But there will be action to prevent cases from remaining in impunity. We are worried now, and I admit this, because we are not obtaining all the information needed to take action in the country's courts.

[Announcer] Now, let us here Victor Salceda of Voz de Honduras Network.

[Salceda] To close this, you said that you do not know anything about the report issued by the Trujillo diocese. They say that there are troops involved in cocaine and drug trafficking. Also, at Congress, a bill will be submitted to reform the law so that any crime committed against a civilian by a soldier can be heard at a civilian court. Could you explain this? Can you give us your opinion about the Catholic Church's report from Trujillo and about the bill that is to be presented at the Congress?

[Callejas] I have no knowledge of the report from the Trujillo Diocese. Once I have it, I will be able to determine the nature of the charges. With the charges we will have specific names and then we can seek these individuals to turn them over to the courts. This is government policy. This is the policy applied by the Armed Forces. This is important because the charges are not enough. We must have something else for substantiation. I do not know if names are mentioned in the Trujillo report because I have not seen the report.

If we are told that soldiers are reportedly involved in drug trafficking, what are we to do for Honduran society? Nothing, because we have no names. Who is accused? No generalizations, therefore, should be made.

If there are names, the Trujillo Diocese must supply them so that an investigation can be conducted.

With regard to the second question, we requested that a long time ago. The Armed Forces asked Congress to interpret the article in the national Constitution that states that any case involving criminal actions by soldiers against civilians must be settled at a civilian court. We agree with that and hope that this will be done as soon as possible to settle these situations which occurred in the past and continue to occur. [passage omitted]

Nicaragua

H. Ortega Comments on Next Administration

PA1502141593 Managua Radio Nicaragua Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 13 Feb 93

[Text] General Humberto Ortega, commander of the Nicaraguan Army, has said the next government must strengthen democracy and the state of law.

Speaking to Mexican journalists at the Managua airport on the night of Friday 13 February shortly before the arrival of Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Gen. Ortega said the restoration of the economy should be the starting point for Nicaragua's development.

Ortega termed the country's situation tragic, which he said is the result of underdevelopment, natural disasters, and the wars the country experienced for two consecutive decades.

[Begin recording] [Ortega] We must develop our economy and seek greater social justice. While the economy is being developed, we must look for alternate means so the poor affected by the great crisis in the country can be rescued from their poverty.

[Unidentified reporter] It has been said you are still a very powerful man in Nicaragua.

[Ortega] I think power lies in the Nicaraguan people's determination to get rid of this tremendous poverty we are suffering, consolidate peace, and reach an understanding to rebuild Nicaragua. To me, reconciliation means to start the economy running and gradually leave poverty behind, although we cannot put an end to these evils overnight. Frankly, there is not a single powerful person here, but a very powerful people bent on overcoming difficulties, strengthening peace, and driving forward.

[Reporter] [Words indistinct] says you stand in the way of solving the country's problems.

[Ortega] Nicaragua's leading obstacle is the backwardness of the economy, from which we have been suffering since the 1972 earthquake. We have not been able to march forward and meet the challenge of development and leave behind the poverty we have been suffering for many years. The earthquake damaged the country profoundly, then came the war of liberation to evict Somoza, which also hurt the country. Later, we had the war that Ronald Reagan inflicted on us. We have not had the chance to demonstrate that we can make a strong country that is economically powerful, and with a great capability to solve our economic problems, with a greater sense of justice and less selfishness. The main obstacle is backwardness and underdevelopment. Everyone can and should contribute to this solution.

[Reporter] Do you think the alternating of power means the next government must be Sandinist?

[Ortega] The political inclination of the next government is irrelevant. What really counts is that all of us pave the way for peace, economic development, greater social justice, and less selfishness. All of us should take care of the abandoned people, and do away with poverty in the future. Therefore, the most important thing is for future governments to establish a democratic system, peace, respect for human rights, and a modern state in Nicaragua. This is fundamental, regardless of the nature of the government.

[Reporter] One last question. What meaning do you attribute to the Mexican president's visit? Some people think this visit means a sort of support for President Chamorro's government.

[Ortega] As everyone knows, Mexico and Nicaragua have been on good terms for many years. This visit is very important for Central America and Nicaragua because it reaffirms Mexico's concern for the south. We know Mexico is busy trying to implement the Free Trade Agreement. There is no doubt a stable and peaceful Central America would greatly help Mexico develop its commercial relations with the United States and Canada. Consequently, Mexico's presence in Central America is important, not only for the Mexicans, but for us Nicaraguans because it can help us solve our problems. [end recording]

Alfredo Cesar Addresses UNO Rally in Esteli

PA1602025993 Managua Radio Catolica in Spanish 1100 GMT 15 Feb 93

[Text] National Opposition Union [UNO] leaders headed demonstrations over the weekend of 12-14 February in Wiwili and Esteli. Engineer Alfredo Cesar, former president of the National Assembly, was one of the keynote speakers at the rally in Esteli.

[Begin Cesar recording] We have gathered today as we have gathered in many cities and towns across Nicaragua for the past few months and as we did three years ago, with one purpose, with one goal in mind, which still remains the goal of the vast majority of Nicaraguan people.

Our purpose and goal was to totally change this country for the benefit of the Nicaraguan people. Three years ago that purpose and that goal stirred the immense majority of the people into casting their sacred votes so that we could win the (?civic), miraculous victory that removed the Sandinist National Liberation Front [FSLN] from the government.

The people may be asking why after three years, before this constitutional term ends, the UNO is once again holding meetings like the one we had this morning; why it is staging marches and demonstrations with the same people who were with us three years ago. The reason, as you know, is that we have not accomplished the changes we want for Nicaragua; we have not accomplished these changes because Violeta Chamorro, betraying the Nicaraguan people's votes, decided to govern with the FSLN and not with the UNO, which the Nicaraguan people elected to govern. [applause]

We want complete change, which implies justice, economic reactivation to create jobs, an honest, corruption-free government, civilian authority over the military, the end of the giveaway, tranquility in homes, peace, education for our children and needed health care. In other words, change implies progress in peace and freedom. We are still proposing the changes we set out to accomplish three years ago and that is why we are holding these rallies and meetings with you. [end recording]

Vice President Godoy Addresses Rally

PA1602042293 Managua Radio Catolica in Spanish 1100 GMT 15 Feb 93

[Text] During the National Assembly presidencies of Dr. Miriam Arguello and Engineer Alfredo Cesar, National Opposition Unity [UNO] personnel were assigned to the

Executive Secretariat. Now that the National Assembly president is Gustavo Tablada, the top executive positions in the Legislative Branch are controlled by the Sandinist National Liberation Front [FSLN].

Over the weekend of 12-14 February, UNO leaders said the government elected in 1990 could be completed without President Chamorro. At rallies in Wiwili and Esteli, the UNO set forth the idea of a plebiscite to determine whether or not the people support the cogovernment. Vice President Virgilio Godoy said that profound changes are needed in Nicaragua and that he could not function in a government so riddled with corruption.

[Begin Godoy recording] Today you have listened to the very distinguished Esteli Deputy Magdalena Rodriguez, who rendered a brief inventory of things we should not forget. The truth is we should not forget, and we should reject people who say that we must forget everything. It is worthwhile to say why.

Almost three years ago, the man who seized the power the people gave the UNO started saying we should forget everything, that we should not look back, that those who looked back would run the risk—as in the Bible story—of turning into a statue of salt. However, not even animals forget; why should we? If a beast stumbles on a stone in the street it will always remember where the stone is in order to avoid stumbling again. We who are not beasts have an even greater obligation not to forget the mistakes we have made.

I would like to refer to [labor leader] Julio Paladino's warm words, which were a necessary, obligatory, and timely reminder of the crisis we are experiencing because of the mistakes the UNO made. We have also listened as the former National Assembly president expressed his views and interpretations of our current situation. Due to all of this it would be to our disadvantage to forget and to our advantage to keep in mind the stone we stumbled on in the road to avoid stumbling again and making the same mistakes.

There is something else I must also discuss: certain events that are taking place now in an attempt to make us forget the past. The pro-government news media—printed, audio, and video—has begun to say that the UNO no longer exists; that we who constitute the UNO are no longer the UNO but the Political Opposition Alliance [APO]. I understand this view, I comprehend it, but I do not share it. They are shaken, worried, and anguished because those three letters—UNO—give them chills, they frighten them, and they would like to see them erased from the map so they will never again exist. [end recording]

Agreements Reached During Salinas Visit

PA1602233793 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 14 Feb 93 pp 1, 5

[Text]

Summary of the Mexican-Nicaraguan Agreements

1. With the exception of meat, Nicaraguan products entering the Mexican market will be levied with a 4 percent tariff.
2. Availability of a $20 million line of credit through the Central American Bank of Economic Integration. This represents 10 times the value of Nicaraguan exports to Mexico.
3. $15 million available as a stopgap loan through the International Development Bank. This will be for Nicaraguan farmers and cattle ranchers.
4. A $1 million line of credit for Nicaraguan commercial banks to obtain Mexican raw materials, spare parts, and consumer goods.
5. Financing for Nicaraguan businesses to obtain 60 Mexican fishing boats.
6. Further review of the 20 percent levy on Nicaraguan meat exports to Mexico.
7. Extradition treaty between both countries.

The figure is practically a compensatory measure for the 20-percent tariff on Nicaraguan beef exports to Mexico. This measure was adopted in view of the 500-percent increase in world beef exports to the Mexican market.

Even though it was brief, Salinas' visit meant political support for Violeta Chamorro, whom he described as the "great asset of respectability and presence in the international community" in Nicaragua. "We admire and respect her," he said.

The governments of Mexico and Nicaragua also signed seven agreements on extradition; visa elimination; financial, technical, and trade cooperation; data base exchange; and technical cooperation in matters of social security. Salinas said this "shows our political commitments are becoming realities."

Part of the agreements signed at the G-3 [Group of Three] and Central American Summit involved the reduction of tariffs for Central American exports to Mexico. This is a measure that favors Nicaragua the most because the average tariff on its exports to the Mexican market will be 4 percent.

Violeta Chamorro "was the big winner at the G-3 Summit and during Salinas' visit to Managua," according to a editorial published in Mexico City EXCELSIOR.

Chamorro thanked Salinas for his "advice and solidarity." She reached the hearts of the Mexican people when she said that "as a Catholic, I feel the Virgin of Guadalupe has illuminated you. You who have placed your eyes on Nicaragua" demonstrating much brotherhood and solidarity in its reconstruction.

She left it clear that she would not give in (she will not leave her post before 1996) because she has a moral commitment to the people. She appealed to the political parties to work for the country's benifit.

On the night of 12 February, Chammorro invited Salinas and his delegation to visit her residence. The visit was not on the official program. One of the members of the Mexican delegation praised Chamorro's candor and her extraordinary spirit as a host. The president said Salinas enjoyed "maypole music so much that he requested a visit to the Atlantic coast region."

Salinas said he respected self-determination. The meetings held with Nicaraguan politicians on 13 February were "in response to the request by political forces to learn about the progress made by the Nicaraguan Government and by the strengthening of the relations between both countries," Salinas said.

Salinas noted the strategic importance of Central America and the vital need to consolidate its peace process.

Salinas' visit ended at 1420 [1920 GMT]. Before leaving, Salinas and Chamorro participated in a ceremony at the Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Neighborhood, where Chamorro inaugurated the Solidarity Production Program. It is a program which has the support of the Mexican Solidarity Program and is promoted by President Salinas.

Panama

Assembly Approves Fourth Chapter of ARI Bill

PA1702041993 Panama City EL PANAMA AMERICA in Spanish 16 Feb 93 p 1A

[Report by Orlando Mendieta C.]

[Text] The fourth chapter of the bill proposal establishing the Interoceanic Region Authority (ARI) was approved on 15 February by the full National Assembly during a five-hour session.

The chapter "Finances, Patrimony, and Management of the Reverted Areas" consists of six articles, five of which were modified by consensus between the Christian Democratic Party and the government legislators.

The project establishes that the revenues received as a result of services rendered and lease, sale, or concession of reverted areas will belong to the ARI.

The project adds these revenues will be earmarked to a special fund to be used in housing construction, as well as social welfare projects. In addition, revenues included in the funds will be deposited in the National Bank of Panama.

These funds, as well as the ARI's patrimony will be subject to the supervision and control of the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic in accordance with appropriate constitutional and legal norms.

According to Article 25 of the bill proposal, the ARI will be subject to an independent external auditing by a duly registered auditing firm.

Finance Minister Mario Galindo stated the debates surrounding the ARI bill proposal have advanced considerably. He added that it is becoming more interesting, as well as improving in several aspects. Up until now the assembly has approved 25 of the 67 articles included in the proposal. In addition, four chapters have already been discussed with only three still remaining.

National Assembly sources have pointed out that there is the possibility the Assembly will conclude the bill proposal discussions during the current week, as long as the discussions continue at their present pace.

Gradual Withdrawal of Police in Darien Announced

PA1602225393 Panama City Telemetro Television Network in Spanish 1730 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Report by Francilino Diaz]

[Excerpts] Panamanian police participating in the Free Border Operation that is searching for three U.S. missionaries in Darien Province will be gradually withdrawn. [passage omitted]

President Guillermo Endara said on 16 February that he would gradually reduce the special contingent currently in Darien Province and that a small group of units will remain in the area. The president said Operation Free Border has had positive results because a hard blow on drug trafficking activities has been dealt and the Colombian guerrillas have been persuaded into leaving Panamanian territory.

Endara also stressed the need to step up surveillance in Darien Province.

Argentina

Ministry Approves German Loan For Atucha-1

PY1602172093 Buenos Aires Radio Nacional Network in Spanish 1500 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] The Economy Ministry has approved an economic agreement between the National Commission for Atomic Energy and the Germany Kredit Anstalt [fuer Wiederaufbau] granting a loan totalling 60.5 million Deutche marks, about $36 million.

The loan will be used to purchase spare parts and contract services that will contribute to improve the efficiency of the Atucha-1 nuclear power plant, Argentina's first nuclear power plant.

Bolivia

Corruption Cases Linked to Drug Trafficking

PY1202140793 Santa Cruz EL MUNDO in Spanish 3 Feb 93 p 3

[Text] La Paz (ANF)—The international drug trafficking industry's economic power continues to erode the foundations of the administrative and operational structure of some Bolivian police organizations.

In an interview with the Fides news agency, Police General Commander Luis Prieto admitted that the powerful economic structure generated by drug trafficking has influenced the moral standards of some policemen, who are encouraged to be corrupt, and this has affected the institution's image.

"Of course, it is one of the factors that has negatively affected police personnel's moral standards. For example, some days ago, an administrative official received money from a prisoner charged with drug trafficking and helped him escape," Prieto said.

He reported that in Magdalena, Beni Department, a lieutenant who guarded the prison is being prosecuted for allowing the escape of a prisoner. The lieutenant was arrested by Trinidad security forces and will be transferred at the disposal of the attorney general.

So far in 1993, five prison inmates have escaped with police cooperation. In four of those cases, the policemen were bribed by people linked to drug trafficking.

During the first half of January Lieutenant Jose Benavidez, the San Sebastian prison governor, helped three prisoners escape. Benavidez was captured, relieved from the institution, and submitted to the regular courts.

According to a report released by General Prieto at the end of January, two police officials on 12 and 13 December 1992 were involved in the escape of three prisoners charged with drug trafficking in the city of Trinidad.

A few days later, Lieutenant Henrry Huayta Mejia, security chief of the San Sebastian prison in Cochabamba, illegally released five prisoners charged with drug trafficking and rape.

Because of such crimes, the following people are at large: Victor Hugo Castedo, Angel Roca Rivero, Gualberto Mendez Salvatierra, and Antonio Drumon Roman, who are the pilots of Colombian drug trafficker Celimo Andrade, and Marco Perez Perez, who is charged with rape.

All those involved were immediately punished. Not a single case has been left unpunished by the higher police authorities, the commander said.

Small Cocaine Laboratories Used Near Brazil

PY1602205893 Santa Cruz EL MUNDO in Spanish 8 Feb 93 National Section p 1

[Text] Trinidad, 7 Feb (EL MUNDO)—After a successful operation by UMOPAR [Mobile Police Unit for Rural Areas] in the town of Primero de Mayo, 25 km south of Guayaramerin, where they caught three "chemists" red-handed who were processing cocaine sulfate to obtain high-purity cocaine in a small laboratory, the investigators arrived at the conclusion that "small" ["hormiga"] processing laboratories are proliferating on the Brazilian border.

According to the data gathered as a result of the monitoring of the laboratories carried out by UMOPAR/Beni, the drug traffickers, who have connections with the Brazilian mafia, have chosen to install small laboratories on the border zone, which has a dense jungle and cannot be easily reached.

These laboratories, which can process between 20 and 30 kg of cocaine, are installed in an area for just a few hours or days. Afterward, they move to another location to prevent drug enforcement organizations from discovering them red-handed and arresting them.

Using their terminology, drug traffickers have described these laboratories as "small camps" ["campamentos hormiga"] because it is easier for them to carry their "stuff" (drugs) in the jungle without running the risk involved in working in well-established laboratories like those destroyed by UMOPAR on several occasions.

Three Drug Traffickers Captured

A small cocaine processing laboratory was discovered between the Santa Ana and Santa Fe cattle ranches near the town of Primero de Mayo when UMOPAR/Guayaramerin and UMOPAR/Beni patrols entered that area a few days ago and, in one evening, discovered three drug traffickers red-handed who were processing cocaine sulfate to obtain cocaine hydrochloride bound for Brazil, where it was scheduled for sale.

Lieutenant Juan Carlos Terrazas, who supplied the official information, pointed out that this operation was part

of a plan currently being implemented by the Special Antinarcotics Force against small laboratories operating on the border.

A total of 1.6 kg of cocaine sulfate, which was part of a larger shipment bound to arrive, was confiscated in the raided laboratory. A substantial quantity of acetone, sulfuric acid, and other chemicals used to "process" cocaine also were discovered. The drug traffickers' identities were not disclosed, but it was emphasized that one is a Brazilian and the other two are Bolivians "who are experts in this trade."

Brazil

Cardoso Supports Patents Law, Discusses GATT

PY1602181193 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 12 Feb 93 Economy Section p 6

[Text] Rio de Janeiro—Yesterday Foreign Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso again advocated in Rio de Janeiro that Brazil does not have any better alternative than implementing a patents law, thus preventing new trade retaliations by the United States. The foreign minister believes Congress will be in a position to approve the intellectual property bill, which is already under discussion, by late September. Cardoso mentioned the pharmaceutical industry lobby [preceding word in English] as "the main obstacle" for voting on the bill.

Fernando Henrique yesterday participated in a seminar sponsored by the National Forum in Rio de Janeiro on the strategies for Brazil's new integration into the world economy. He noted that today he will meet with Science and Technology Minister Israel Vargas to discuss the patents law. The foreign minister stressed that many amendments were introduced in the original bill, amendments that must be quickly reviewed. He denied, however, that this urgency in reviewing the bill is linked to pressures by U.S. officials.

Concerning the progress achieved in the Uruguay Round, an effort by 108 nations to liberalize world trade within the GATT, the foreign minister was pessimistic. He said: "The negotiations are sluggishly following the change in U.S. administration and the irresoluteness of the main economic blocs, especially in the agricultural field."

Implications of Franco Decision To Repeal Law

PY1602205593 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 13 Feb 93 p 3

[Text] In order to fathom the implications of President Itamar Franco's provisional measure abrogating Law No. 8200 (which deals with taxes), suffice it to mention the smug satisfaction with which Deputy Jose Genoino [PT, Workers Party-Sao Paulo] welcomed Franco's decision. According to Genoino, a moderate within the PT, this measure has placed businessmen between a rock and a hard place because they cannot protest the IPMF [provisional tax on financial operations] and, at the same time, refuse to pay taxes. Genoino's reaction is indicative of the situation confronting the country, which is characterized by a total disregard for the rule of law and the rights inherent to it. Moreover, both Franco's provisional measure and Genoino's reaction reflect the entrenchment (or would it be better still to use the image of the hardening of concrete—fatal and slower?) of the prejudice against businessmen that pervades the Franco administration.

And yet, this is not the end of the story. Anti-business sentiments may be expressed in different ways. The Geisel administration [1974-1979], for example, tried to curtail freedom of initiative. Among the main tenets underpinning his statist policy, let us mention "superpower chauvinism" and the contention that private companies would not be able to achieve the national objectives set by the Geisel administration all by themselves. The Franco administration harbors a grudge against businessmen. For example, during the French Revolution the Constituent Assembly was of the view that the price of wheat went up because monopolists decided so and that they could feed the French people if they sent some people to the block. Similarly, the Franco administration believes that businessmen are only interested in a quick profit and are anti-patriotic by definition. It further believes that inflation is the result of their unbounded ambition, which has to be punished not so much with fire and brimstone as with popular wrath.

Before his decision to repeal Law No. 8200 was known, (not even the planning minister knew about it and, most probably, neither did the finance minister) Franco poured more oil on the flames of popular discontent on 11 February when he said businessmen had the right (for us the constitutional right) to convene a behind-closed-doors meeting to discuss the IPMF. The interview Franco granted in the morning was a clever move to lead one down the primrose path. Franco first reiterated that businessmen had the right of assembly. He then warned that there might be demonstrations against profit-driven businessmen, who are not concerned about Brazil, and that businessmen have to respect such demonstrations (it seems quite fitting to ask here: Why should businessmen and not the police respect demonstrators, when they did everything possible so that the situation got completely out of hand?). Franco made a subtle commentary: "The government will not encourage such demonstrations but they are sure to occur spontaneously. Such demonstrations are indicative of people's discontent. Perhaps citizens no longer wish to remain silent while prices continue to skyrocket, especially those for food." He concluded by saying: "I have discussed things at length, I have talked too much. Goodbye." The government itself will not be responsible for whatever happens in the street, but businessmen will. They not only increase prices but also refuse to accept protest demonstrations. The famous Corporal Anselmo [no further identified] could not have chosen such farfetched situations, which are nonetheless still dangerous.

The grudge Franco nurses against businessmen results from an outlook on life that had become evident in the elections, in which Franco was a Constituent Assembly member, that leads him to give rabble-rousing speeches. His excellency can only address the rabble because those who are unionized are against the IPMF and threw in their lot with businessmen to protest this tax. The presence of trade union leaders in the demonstration against the tax on checks, as it is commonly known, was completely overlooked by the head of state. Given the fact that Franco's objective is to do everything different from what the previous administration did (except for the authoritarian way of handling certain situations), he shifted the spotlight from trade union leaders to businessmen, greedy people and foes of Brazil. The problem lies in the fact that he does not want to admit that the people are beginning to realize that no progress is made by criticizing the pharmaceutical industry, the food industry, supermarkets, or the little corner shop. It has begun to dawn on them that promises made to PT members do not solve their everyday problems either. Franco cannot grasp the realities of this situation, which materializes every day, because even if he tries to face up to it he will not know how to cope with a reality that exceeds his strength. He then tries to attack businessmen because he cherishes the hope that in that war, in which he holds all the winning cards, he will be able to continue fooling the people. In the meantime, they have not taken to the streets to prove Franco's prophesy correct and demonstrate against greedy businessmen. "Basic reforms" will perhaps open a new chapter in the history of demagoguery in Brazil after the repeal of Law No. 8200. But we will return to this issue later.

Chile

Pinochet Says Army Already Reduced to Minimum

PY1702140993 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1000 GMT 17 Feb 93

[Excerpts] Army Commander General Augusto Pinochet presided over the inauguration of the Chiloe Army Engineering Regiment No. 8 in Puerto Aysen, 77 km from Coihaique. [passage omitted]

Pinochet was welcomed by Colonel Ricardo Soto Jerez, the commander of the new regiment. [passage omitted]

During a brief chat with local journalists, Pinochet refused to comment on the announcement made by the Argentine Army that it is going to reduce its troops. Pinochet said this is an internal matter in another country. Asked if there is any chance similar measures will be taken in Chile, Pinochet said:

[Begin recording] [Pinochet] Gentlemen, the Army is reduced to the minimum. Its organization could be changed but not its size.

[Unidentified reporter] Not for the time being.

[Pinochet] Nor later. [passage omitted]

Azapa Valley Seen as New Route for Cocaine

PY1702134293

[Editorial Report] Santiago EL MERCURIO in Spanish on 7 February publishes on pages A1 and A13 a 2,000-word article by Enrique Mujica entitled "Cocaine and Raw Cocaine Paste Get to Arica through the Valley of Azapa." It describes this new drug route from Bolivia, noting that "raw cocaine paste," the most widespread drug in the First Region, is light brown and is highly addictive.

The article describes the process followed to produce raw cocaine paste. The Azapa valley, to the east of Arica, is said to be Chile's new gateway for cocaine, especially raw cocaine paste. To prove this point, parcels of drugs are said to be seized in that valley every day. During the latest police operation on 5 February, 11 kg of cocaine paste was seized.

Mujica points out that so far this year, a record 35 kg of raw cocaine paste has been seized. This contrasts sharply with previous years; namely 41 kg in 1990, 21 kg in 1991, and nearly 70 kg of cocaine paste and 30 kg of cocaine hydrochloride in 1992.

The article adds that the Antinarcotics Police from Arica have pursued drug traffickers for a long time. At the beginning they concentrated on Chcallluta, near the border with Peru, but then they focussed their attention on the Azapa valley where many Bolivians and Peruvians live.

"Pushers" are said to come from Bolivia to the Azapa valley. From there they walk along San Jose River carrying "loaves" of cocaine base on their backs to Arica. It takes eight days to get to the Azapa valley where they sell the drugs.

A place known as El Paradero, approximately 60 km from Arica, is a favorite place to conduct transactions. The article describes the way in which the transactions take place

Police Deputy Chief Cubillos is quoted as saying that his task there is not easy because "the frost at night and the heat during the day have affected many police officers with sunstroke and colds." He added that the more drugs seized, the more threats they receive.

Although Cubillas reported that more personnel and logistic support will be assigned to the region, the border with Peru and Bolivia extends for 450 km. The police are understaffed and lack logistic support to fight the traffickers.

The price of cocaine paste gradually increases as it passes from one trafficker to another on its way to Santiago. In Bolivia, 1 kg of raw cocaine paste costs between $300 and $400 while in Santiago it costs $6,000. The price of a "reefer" laced with one gram of cocaine base ranges between 1,000 and 1,500 pesos.

The police believe there are small clandestine laboratories in the region that process cocaine and that they hope to discover "how the money is laundered."

Colombia

Government Condemns 15 Feb Car Bomb Attacks

PA1602153093 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 0000 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] The Colombian Government issued a communique on the afternoon of 15 February condemning the car bomb attacks in which four people were killed and more than 100 were injured. Government Minister Fabio Villegas was the spokesman.

[Begin Villegas recording] The detonation of explosive devices in central areas of the capital and other cities at a time when hundreds of citizens are circulating is evidence of the murderous mentality of the leaders of narcoterrorism. These insane criminals want to make the country yield to their interests by attacking the very existence of justice and the country's most basic moral and patriotic values.

The country has a great challenge. The lives, freedom, and the most fundamental rights of Colombians are being threatened by narcoterrorism. The national government reiterates its firm determination to face these criminal organizations and asks Colombians not to waver in the defense of the principles that identify the nation's unity. The threat of narcoterrorism persists. The authorities and citizens must increase their alertness. We must understand that the current situation demands the nation's unity and the resolve of all good Colombians, without party distinctions, to prevent the country from succumbing to desperation and to build a single force to prevent terrorism's objective of disrupting the country's life. [end recording]

Medellin Cartel Claims Responsibility

PA1602201693 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 1818 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] Santa Fe de Bogota, 16 Feb (NOTIMEX)—The Colombian mafia directed by Pablo Escobar has claimed responsibility for the 15 February terrorist attacks that left four dead and some 130 persons injured in Bogota.

According to the daily LA PRENSA, an anonymous caller phoned the paper and said the Medellin Cartel warned that the terrorist acts would continue as long as the government continues the search for Escobar.

Nine car bombs, most of them in Santa Fe de Bogota, have exploded in the last 40 days with a toll of over 50 dead and nearly 200 persons injured.

The newspaper reported that the Medellin Cartel spokesman said the security organizations must also pursue the drug traffickers in the so-called Cali Cartel, Escobar's enemies.

"If the government expects us to turn ourselves in and end the attacks, it must begin by offering rewards and searching for the leaders of the Cali Cartel," said an alleged spokesman for Escobar's organization.

The drug lord, for whom the government is offering over $7 million, escaped from Envigado jail in July 1992 with nine lieutenants, seven of whom voluntarily turned themselves over to the Colombian authorities.

The voluntary surrender program was suspended in October 1992 after Brance Munoz Mosquera, military chief of the Medellin Cartel, was killed during a police operation and the search for Escobar was intensified.

The informer also said the recently formed organization called "the Pepes" [Persecuted by Pablo Escobar] was formed by the Cali Cartel, the morning newspaper stated.

"The Pepes," who is blamed for the killing of 23 persons, the explosion of two car bombs, and the destruction of homes owned by Escobar have threatened to counter all terrorist actions of the Medellin Cartel with violent actions.

The "CMI Television Newscast" insisted that Escobar sent a letter to President Cesar Gaviria offering to turn himself over to the authorities in exchange for the immediate suspension of the search operations. The government has neither denied nor confirmed that report.

Anti-Escobar Group Reportedly Burns Residence

PA1602173093 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 0000 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Report by Miriam Ortiz]

[Text] A residence apparently owned by Marina Henao Vallejo, sister-in-law of drug trafficker Pablo Escobar Gaviria, was set on fire on the afternoon of 15 February, presumably by members of the self-styled Persecuted by Pablo Escobar group. According to authorities, three men and one woman entered the house, in Poblado neighborhood in Medellin, spread gasoline, and set it on fire. It is believed this attack was in retaliation for the two car bombs set off in Santa Fe de Bogota on 15 February.

Policeman Armando Prado, chief of the press information section of the Medellin Metropolitan Police, was killed in downtown Medellin by hired gunmen.

In Narino Palace, President Cesar Gaviria swore in Jorge Orlando Melo as new adviser for Medellin affairs on 15 February. He replaces Maria Emma Mejia, who for two years dealt with the problems of Medellin's poorest people.

New Group Providing Money

PA1602162793 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 0000 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] It has been learned that another organization has formed an alliance with the Pepes [Persecuted by Pablo Escobar] group. A revealing report published by SEMANA magazine provides previously unknown details of a war in which the Pepes carry out violent actions while Free Colombia [Colombia Libre] provides money and intelligence.

Free Colombia is a group of Pablo Escobar's former associates who, with the support of businessmen and industrialists, seek his capture. The group has huge financial resources that allow it to offer $5 million for the drug trafficker's head and 200 million pesos for his lieutenants. In January it paid 300 million pesos for information that led authorities to Palomo [John Edison Rivera] and Tyson [Brance Munoz Mosquera]. The group emerged after the murder of the Moncada and Galeano brothers. The group has stated that bombs are not fought with bombs but with intelligence operations in support of and in coordination with the authorities. It claims Escobar has lost 300 of his men and that in January he spent $10 million for his terrorist campaign. It has also stated that the group's information has helped authorities carry out 40 operations. One of Free Colombia's current objectives is to capture a bomb expert. It says he is a person who specializes in car bombs.

* Gaviria Sees Need To Modify Surrender Policy

93P20088X Santa Fe de Bogota EL TIEMPO in Spanish 27 Jan 93 p 11A

[Text] In a message to Attorney General Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla, President Cesar Gaviria Trujillo said he agreed with him on the need to make some modifications to the policy on surrendering to justice in order to enhance its effectiveness.

The president indicated that these modifications "call for a revision of some aspects of current criminal regulations, such as giving the Prosecutor General's Office increased flexibility to negotiate so it can grant penal benefits which are commensurate with the degree of cooperation with the justice system."

In yesterday's message to the Attorney General, Gaviria Trujillo also said that with this action it would be possible to "dismantle the automatic accumulation of sentence reductions; replace automatic sentence reductions with gradual benefits to be granted at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office; and allow a range of penal benefits which permit an appropriate and rational correspondence between the benefits and the degree and nature of cooperation with the justice system. In this way, it will not be possible to derive personal advantage from measures which have strengthened the justice system."

Virtues of the Surrender Policy

However, the president emphasized that with the creation of the Prosecutor General's Office, "the State has been regaining the ability to investigate crimes and identify suspects, all of which reestablishes the necessary credibility of the justice system. In effect, the investigation of crimes which for many years sat on the shelves without progress toward identifying the principle culprits, today offers the first results, thereby permitting the intellectual authors of the crimes to be brought to trial."

He added that "one of the main objectives of the new criminal policy is to achieve greater effectiveness and speed in the justice system. A policy of severe sentences does little good if the State does not capture the criminals, or if the lack of evidence prevents a suitable conviction."

He said that, "for this reason, a system of penal benefits has been devised for those who surrender to justice and cooperate with it; for those who contribute toward clarifying their own responsibility for crimes and allow the trials to be concluded quickly because they agree to the charges formulated by the Prosecutor General's Office; and, as was recently proposed, for those who help to identify the authors or perpetrators of crimes."

At any rate, according to Gaviria, "it is evident that for society in general it is desirable to capture and punish major criminals, even though it may be necessary to grant appropriate penal benefits to the author or perpetrator of a crime if they decide to cooperate with justice."

* Army Chief Guzman Says Budget Insufficient

93P20089A Santa Fe de Bogota EL TIEMPO in Spanish 29 Jan 93 p 10A

[Text] The Army reiterated yesterday that the budget it has been allocated by the government continues to be insufficient for the maintenance and operation of its 120,000 troops.

Major General Hernan Jose Guzman Rodriguez, the commander of that institution, said yesterday that the deficiencies are reflected primarily in the lack of suitable armaments and the scarcity of uniforms for the troops. By way of example, the high-ranking official noted that soldiers currently have one or two uniforms for the entire year, whereas they should have four.

These statements by Guzman were made yesterday, at the close of the first part of the first summit of generals from that branch in 1993. The meeting was attended by four division and 16 brigade commanders, two commanders of mobile brigades, and the Armed Forces chiefs of operations. Minister of Defense Rafael Pardo Rueda opened the meeting.

Speaking to reporters, General Guzman said the purpose of the summit was to overcome some operational deficiencies the Army has in some zones of the country and

which, at times, prevent them from achieving greater success in their fight against criminal activity.

At the same time, he announced a change in the procedures which have been used up to now by military intelligence services, especially in urban areas of the country. The official said that restructuring in this functional area had allowed them to increase their operations against the guerrillas and their support network with positive results.

Finally, Guzman said the summit of generals will prepare an evaluation of troop welfare which will be presented to high-level government officials.

Ecuador

Minister Says Country Not To Join UPEB

PA1402043093 Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 12 Feb 93

[Text] Ecuadoran Agriculture Minister Mariano Gonzalez has said Ecuador will not be a member of the Union of Banana Exporting Countries [UPEB] because it is not good for the country.

[Begin Gonzalez recording] The UPEB director made several untimely remarks not long ago. We do not think either UPEB or OPEC can justify their existence. As an UPEB member country, Ecuador could not have increased its participation in the world market as we have done and just as Colombia, Venezuela, and other UPEB member countries have done. I understand UPEB's existence can be justified from a technical viewpoint. Nevertheless, from the viewpoint of market regulation, and judging from our talks with numerous local producers, it is not good for Ecuador to become a UPEB member country. That has been the country's policy in recent years. [end recording]

New Energy and Mines Minister Sworn In

PA1602141793 Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish 2300 GMT 15 Feb 93

[Text] Pablo Baquerizo Nasur was sworn in as the new energy and mines minister at the Government Palace on 15 February. He replaces Minister Andres Barreiro Vivas, who was acquitted by the National Congress but fired by the president of the Republic.

Paraguay

Mediation Committee Fails To Solve Crisis

PY1602214693 Asuncion ABC COLOR in Spanish 16 Feb 93 p 4

[Text] Yesterday the members of the mediation committee that was created to resolve the Colorado Party's internal crisis presented three alternative solutions to President Andres Rodriguez: hold new elections within the ANR [National Republican Association, Colorado Party], cast two simultaneous votes, or wait for the decision of the regular courts. The delivery of the document was the last step for the mediation committee, which failed to reconcile the supporters of Colorado Party candidates Juan Carlos Wasmosy and Luis Maria Argana.

Justice and Labor Minister Oscar Paciello stated: "It is up to the people to vote for the candidate they deem to be the most appropriate." He said voting is the best way to elect the Colorado Party candidate for the 9 May presidential elections.

The mediation committee members yesterday went to the Government Palace to meet President Rodriguez. The committee included Foreign Minister Alexis Frutos Vaesken, Justice and Labor Minister Oscar Paciello, [former Education Minister] Dionisio Gonzalez Torres, and Miguel Angel Gonzalez Casabianca, secretary general of the presidency of the Republic.

After the delivery of the document containing the possible mechanisms to solve the conflict within the ANR, Rodriguez appreciated the steps taken by the mediation committee, but he regretted that it failed to reconcile the opposing factions.

Paciello said the government will analyze the alternatives in order to chose the most feasible one, but he did not reveal the deadline for the president to make a decision on the matter. He noted: "Nobody can make a decision for anyone. It is up to the people to cast their votes to elect the candidate they deem to be the most appropriate." He said the negotiating committee concluded its task by delivering the document to the president of the Republic.

He stated: "We reported to the president of the Republic on the points that will in no way help reconcile the factions, despite the fact that they (the Argana's supporters) speak about a possible reconciliation. The factions were unable to reach an agreement because they lack the will to reconcile themselves and to renounce their positions. They should hold elections if each of them thinks they have more supporters."

We should recall that the Juan Carlos Wasmosy-Angel Roberto Seifart ticket had supported the decision to annul the 27 December primaries and call for new elections. The two leaders tendered their resignations as candidates for president and vice president of the Republic, respectively, provided that the other candidates also resign, and proposed that a candidate be elected by consensus.

The Luis Maria Argana-Juan Bautista Ybanez ticket, however, asked the mediation committee to respect the Constitution, the Electoral Code, and the 27 December election results.

According to the unofficial vote count released by the party Electoral Court, the Argana faction obtained 48 percent of the votes while the Wasmosy ticket ran second with 42 percent.

The results of the vote count could not be made official because some members of the party Electoral Court resigned.

Rodriguez Reaffirms Elections for 9 May

PY1602191393 Asuncion ABC COLOR in Spanish 16 Feb 93 p 2

[Text] President Andres Rodriguez has blamed the [Luis Maria] Argana faction for the failure of the negotiations conducted by the special committee established to find a solution to the ANR [National Republican Association, Colorado Party] internal conflict. After criticizing the radical position adopted by the Argana faction, Rodriguez explained that he wants to solve "the crisis they caused within the Colorado Party." About the possible absence of an ANR candidate in the 9 May general elections, he said: "I do not know whether the ANR will have a candidate, but the elections will be held unequivocally and the transfer of power will take place on 15 August."

General Andres Rodriguez, who is honorary president of the ANR Executive Board, received a report yesterday afternoon submitted by the negotiating committee established last week to find a solution to the ANR dispute. Rodriguez regretted that the parties involved were unable to reach an agreement. In this regard, he blamed the Argana faction for adopting a radical position. He questioned the reconciliation being promoted by the Argana faction by stating: "I do not see them harboring any reconciliatory spirit."

The report handed to the president encompasses three proposals to resolve the ANR party crisis: 1) to hold new party elections; 2) to uphold the Lema system; and 3) to await a court ruling.

Rodriguez said the negotiating committee discussed every alternative to find a solution to the ANR crisis. The president regretted, however, that "it was unable to achieve the expected results; it failed to meet our expectations." He added that he has requested a written report so that in the future there will be evidence of "the determination and effort put forth to help the Colorado Party."

Asked why the committee failed, Rodriguez said: "I really do not know what to allude this to." He added: "It is in view of the misunderstandings of the people who were contacted. All ANR presidential hopefuls were contacted. People have adopted a very radical position; this is why we did not succeed."

Asked which sector adopted a radical position, he said: "the Argana faction in particular."

When noted that some doubted his intention to mediate in the ANR crisis, Rodriguez stated: "I do not know why they think like that. I am interested in achieving a prompt solution to the crisis they caused within the ANR, one that will reconcile the party like their movement claims to want to. But I do not see them harboring any reconciliatory spirits." He added: "We have discussed all possible alternatives to find an adequate solution to this disagreement."

When asked whether elections will be held on 9 May if the ANR does not have a candidate participating in the general elections, he said: "I do not know whether there will be an ANR candidate participating in the elections, but the elections will be unequivocally held. I reassert, confirm, and categorically state that there will be elections in May and that the transfer of power will take place on 15 August."

Asked which of the three alternatives that were proposed will be chosen, Rodriguez said that he has yet to review the report.

Questioned if he will now cease his efforts to mediate in the ANR crisis, Rodriguez said: "No one can ever cease in his efforts to do so. I believe there are still some possibilities left. We still hope that a solution will be found because by disqualifying this executive branch committee, they also are disqualifying me because this committee was made up of executive branch members."

Asked whether there is a rupture between Rodriguez and the Colorado Party, the president said: "No, not at all. I cannot break up with my party. I am a Colorado Party member."

Colorado Party Convention, Coup Rumors Viewed

PY1602193593 Asuncion HOY in Spanish 14 Feb 93 p 20

[Article by Antonio Salum-Flecha]

[Text] Those who have ever hoped to solve the ANR [National Republican Association, Colorado Party] crisis through political negotiations, in which consensus presidential and vice presidential candidates are chosen and some of those who appointed themselves winners in the 27 December primaries resign, already know that all they can do is to wait for the verdict of the Independent Electoral Court, TEI. The members of a new TEI will be elected during the special convention to be held today at Colorado Party headquarters.

Considering that the [Juan Carlos] Wasmosy-[Angel Roberto] Seifart ticket conventioneers are more numerous, although they may not comprise the two-thirds of the votes required to elect the new TEI members, we can easily see that the [Luis Maria] Argana-[Juan Bautista] Ybanez ticket would refuse these members and again prevent the TEI from dictating a verdict. As a result, the ANR would be definitively left without candidates to register at the Central Electoral Court on 9 March and thus blocked from participating in the 9 May general elections. The only solution to avoid this possibility would be to form a new ticket with

members from the tickets that received more votes and through the resignation of others. If this solution is not agreed upon either, the ANR's chances to participate in the elections definitively end. At this stage, the main concern is about what happens from 9 March to 9 May.

If the country has general elections without the ANR's participation, the stability of the elected administration will be precarious because it will be under constant coup threats, the political atmosphere will be tumultuous, and the country will become unsafe for foreign investment, which will result in economic paralysis. Under these circumstances, the political achievements of the transition-to-democracy process may be lost because the social economic problems inherited from almost 40 years of dictatorship will not have been solved in so short a period.

For this precise reason, rumors of alleged coups d'etat have been flooding the national scene and stimulating opposition members to increasingly criticize the government, the ANR, and the Armed Forces. This is why, shortly after requesting resumption of the civilian-military dialogue, six presidential candidates, (Laino, Canese, Resck, Prieto Yegros, Cazal, and Zapag) charged—before the executive branch—the soldiers who participated in the ceremony organized by the ANR to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the 2-3 February 1989 civilian-military movement with electoral fraud and violation of the Constitution, and "suspended" the civilian-military dialogue. National Encounter member Euclides de Acevedo classified the issue as "a valid electoral option with an undoubtedly good publicity effect, for which we must congratulate them." However, in the opinion of Senator Carlos Romero Pereira, of the Argana-Ybanez ticket, the charges may be "the first arguments in favor of a legislative interpellation."

Meanwhile, the possibilities of a coup d'etat increase steadily, parallel with harsh criticism of the Armed Forces, which conducted the 2-3 February 1989 civilian-military movement. It cannot be forgotten that, thanks to the Armed Forces, the country currently has freedom of expression and the Colorado and opposition parties now can conduct their political activities. However, we must clearly explain what a coup d'etat is because the possible moves being publicly discussed do not have this connotation. Concretely, a coup d'etat is an exceptional measure, almost always linked to violence to which a political group, an organization, or a person resorts with the help of the Armed Forces to abruptly change the system of government in force or radically change a political situation. To this extent, the first measure to ensure the stability of a coup is to dissolve Congress. Is this what might happen in our country?

As far as we can understand from the news reported by the media, Article 3 of the Final and Temporary Provisions of the 1992 Constitution establishes that "the president of the Republic, senators, and deputies will stay in their respective offices until their successors are elected in the general elections scheduled for 1993. Their duties and powers are those established in this Constitution both for the president of the Republic and for the members of Congress, which cannot be dissolved. Until the senators and deputies elected in the 1993 general elections are installed, the process for the discussion and approval of laws will conform to the provisions of Articles 154/167 of the 1967 Constitution."

According to Article 231, however, "if the president-elect and vice president-elect have not been proclaimed in the manner established in this Constitution in time for the date set for the inauguration, or if the elections have been nullified, the outgoing president will turn the government over to the chief justice of the Supreme Court, who will hold the presidential office until the inauguration. During this period the chief justice will take a leave of absence from his judicial duties." In case the president of the Republic resigns before 15 August, Article 234 establishes: "In case of the inability or absence of the president of the Republic, he will be replaced by the vice president. If the vice president is also unavailable, the following succession order will be followed: the Senate president, the Chamber of Deputies president, and the Supreme Court's chief justice."

Therefore, as long as these prospects conform to the current constitutional provisions, we cannot call any of these possibilities a coup d'etat. Only those who want to stain or impair the international image of the current Paraguayan administration can call these possible solutions a coup d'etat. In Article 143, which deals with international relations, the national Constitution establishes that in its international relations, the Republic of Paraguay accepts international laws and adopts the following principles, among others: 1) national independence, 2) the self-determination of all peoples,... and 7) nonintervention, and so forth. This means that it is absolutely and constitutionally inadmissible if some ambassadors interfere in our domestic affairs, as has been occurring lately.

Elections Feasible Without Colorado Participation

PY1602200493 Asuncion ABC COLOR in Spanish 16 Feb 93 p 13

[Editorial: "Democracy in Paraguay is Feasible With or Without the Colorado Party"]

[Text] We must once again praise the president of the Republic, who decidedly sticks to his decision to hand over power to whoever wins the 9 May elections. However, for General Rodriguez to be able to fulfill his promise the elections must invariably be held on that date and no later. This makes him the main guardian of the law that established the date and the main executor of the electoral schedule.

What is even more praiseworthy is the fact that Gen. Rodriguez sticks to his promise despite the pressure being exerted by some political leaders who are listening to a variety of tempting proposals to prolong their grip on power, as well as others who uphold the deceitful

theory that if the Colorado Party does not win the elections chaos will be unleashed. Others predict civil war, coups, a state of unruliness, and other apocalyptic evils if the citizenry does not do what the Colorado Party proposes. Despite all this, President Rodriguez remains calm and inspires the citizenry.

The possibility that the Colorado Party will not choose a candidate by the deadline established for their registration is growing fast. If this happens, as is public knowledge, the elections will be held without the Colorado Party's participation. The same could happen to the Febrerista Revolutionary Party if it is unable to solve its internal disputes. However, politicians use different tones of voice when referring to the two cases. Colorado Party leaders state that "the country cannot be governed without the Colorado Party." The more bold among them have even asserted that a coup or a civil war will be unleashed if the elections are held without the party's participation.

The 9 May elections will give the country a new president, vice president, and other elective authorities regardless of the Colorado Party's participation. Although its leaders feel frustrated and will uphold any irregularity or even violence to prevent the democratic process from continuing to develop, Colorado Party people will abide by the law and in a peaceful and orderly manner and adjust to the circumstances. It is easier to foresee this than the violence and illegality predicted by others.

The Paraguayan people—of which Colorado Party followers are a large part—are known for their peaceful political conduct, and throughout history have never shown an inclination to systematically violate the institutions or use weapons to disrupt legal order. Those who have done so have only been factions, and on the few occasions in which they did so it was for exceptional reasons fully justified by history.

Knowing the Paraguayan people is a good enough reason to predict that if the 9 May elections are held without the participation of the Colorado Party, we will still have a government legitimately elected by the people that will be respected by Colorado Party followers as well as other citizens. If some passionate leaders, under the fancy excuse that their party did not participate in the elections, try to stage a military coup, request military intervention, boycott the elected government, or use any other illegitimate resources, they will have to be confronted with the law, the institutions, and the national forces' commitment to see that the law and the institutions are respected.

We must bear in mind Gen. Rodriguez' promise to hand over government to whoever is elected. He will do so whether or not the Colorado Party has candidates, whether or not the Febrerista Revolutionary Party has solved its internal crisis, and in spite of any other domestic problem that may exist. The president of the Republic, like the rest of the citizenry, believes the democratic system under construction cannot be subject to the fact that a few partisan leaders are unable to solve their conflicts in a timely manner.

Democratic Social Coalition Officially Formed

PY1602205293 Asuncion NOTICIAS in Spanish 13 Feb 93 p 6

[Excerpt] The electoral coalition called the Democratic and Social Coalition [Concertacion Democratica y Social—CDS], which supports engineer Ricardo Canese's presidential pre-candidacy, was officially launched on 12 February. The ceremony took place at the Hotel del Paraguay at 1000 and was attended by representatives of all social and political organizations that comprise the CDS.

They include three peasant organizations, the United Labor Federation, some National Workers Federation members, the Christian Democratic Party, the Humanist and Communist Party, the Paraguay for All movement, the 26 May Independent Democratic Movement, the Febrerista Multisectorial, and Democratic Action.

Canese explained the significance of the CDS, which he said supports marginal social sectors, who need a real change, not only from a political but also from a socio-economic viewpoint. He said this alliance remains open to other political and social sectors that want to join it.

On 16 February the CDS will ask for its official recognition from the electoral courts. On that occasion, the CDS also will release its program of government. [passage omitted]

Peru

Congress Votes Against Coupists Amnesty Request

PA1702021093 Lima Global de Television Network in Spanish 0000 GMT 17 Feb 93

[Excerpts] The Congressional Constitution Commission rejected the amnesty request for military members who took part in the foiled coup attempt on 13 November. The possibility exists for a presidential pardon after the trial ends.

The amnesty request was rejected by the Constitution Commission with votes cast by the majority of the representatives. The Popular Christian Party, the [word indistinct], Democratic Coordination, and the Left-Wing Democratic Movement were unable to do much in the face of the six votes by the official alliance, which were cast at the end of an extensive debate where arguments sometimes became feverish.

The amnesty vote had two variables if it had won: To extend the amnesty benefit to events that took place between 5 April to after 13 November 1992 or to pardon specific crimes by each of the retired military officers

who are now facing court martial by the Supreme Military Justice Council. There were other proposals, such as taking the discussion to the plenary meeting on 19 February and to appoint a subcommission to draft a general consensus.

The minority position was defended by each of the congressmen with the right to vote. The position of the official wing was defended by Cesar Fernandez Arce and by the commission president, who displayed a previously unknown oratorical capacity and said that the traditional political parties used the military members.

The tacit description of coupists was what set the discussion ablaze. [passage omitted]

[Begin Carlos Torres y Torres Lara, Constitution Commission chairman, recording] We believe these military members should be set free by a pardon. In other words, they should be set free after they are sentenced so they and the politicians who encouraged them to this endeavor learn that the members of the military are obliged to obey orders. They should have obeyed their commanders' orders, just like the commanders have to obey the president's orders. [end recording]

Venezuela

Court Suspends Elections in Barinas, Sucre

PA1602180393 Caracas Venezolana de Television Network in Spanish 1550 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] On the morning of 16 February Interior Affairs Minister Jesus Ramon Cardona reported that the executive will maintain the emergency measures in Barinas and Sucre States, which have reported public order disturbances in the wake of the decision by the Supreme Court of Justice temporarily suspending new elections in the two states. The Court ruled that the governors in office before the 6 December elections—namely Eduardo Morales, in Sucre, and Rafael Rosales Pena, in Barinas—are to remain in office as acting governors. Justice Marina Calcano explained that new elections will be suspended until the Court rules on the matter. This is how the judge explained the matter:

[Begin Calcano recording] Given the implications of this very delicate matter, the Court agreed to hear the appeal to declare the government's action null and void. It declared it an urgent matter. For that reason, it decided to suspend the elections in Sucre and Barinas. The decision is based on Article 88 of the Supreme Court's Charter Law, which allows it to refer to Article 548 of the Civil Procedures Code when it deems an administrative action can [word indistinct] the results of an annulment appeal, when the file contains insufficient evidence. [end recording]

In learning of the ruling, Supreme Electoral Council [CSE] President Isidro Morales Paul said his entity will abide by it and will forward the necessary information to the Court so the final decision can be made.

[Begin recording] [Morales] This is basically a preliminary decision because it suspends the administrative order. That is why there will be no elections, as the CSE had announced. Second, it agrees to hear the annulment appeal that the order was illegal. The Court, however, will not hand down a ruling on the in-depth matter. This is basically a procedural action. That is why we support the Court's ruling and must send the file. We will do it within three days of being notified.

[Unidentified Reporter] What will the file that you forward to the Court contain?

[Morales] The entire administrative file, with all the background information, as the Court's ruling states. [end recording]

Situation Reportedly 'Normal'

PA1602180693 Caracas Venezolana de Television Network in Spanish 1550 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Report by Milagros Rodriguez]

[Text] We are live from Miraflores Palace. Defense Minister Ivan Dario Jimenez Sanchez presented his weekly report to President Carlos Andres Perez a few minutes ago. At the end of the meeting, Jimenez commented on the incidents in Barinas and Sucre States, saying that fortunately there were no major problems thanks to the National Guard's quick intervention in both states.

In addition, the defense minister said that according to reports he received on 16 February, the situation in both states is normal and a tense calm prevails, which means there is no reason to deploy a contingent to reinforce the National Guard in Barinas and Sucre.

Defense Minister Ivan Dario Jimenez Sanchez also said we must wait for events to develop to decide if constitutional guarantees should be suspended in those states.

It is relevant to report that activities at the Miraflores Palace have been conducted quite smoothly on 16 February, and everyone expects President Carlos Andres Perez to attend a petroleum exhibit at the Science Museum at 1800 on 16 February, where he will inaugurate the event called From the Universe to the Barrel [Del Universo al Barril]. Journalists will be able to meet with the Venezuelan president and ask him about the actions that could be implemented in the next few hours in the two states where conflicts have developed, keeping in mind the Supreme Court's ruling.

Two Dead, 15 Wounded in Cumana

PA1602190693 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 1751 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] Caracas, 16 Feb (DPA)— Radio Caracas reported on 16 February that two students were killed, 15 people injured, and dozens of businesses looted in Cumana,

Sucre State. All of this occurred following a Supreme Court announcement suspending the disputed elections.

Citing Ramon Martinez, Movement Toward Socialism, MAS, candidate for governor who is claiming victory in the December elections, the radio station reported that incidents are taking place in Cumana in eastern Venezuela, a city that was placed under military control on 15 February.

According to the Interior Affairs Ministry, the government has acted "with complete caution in complying with its duty to protect people and property."

The demonstrations were staged in Cumana after a ruling by the Supreme Court was announced suspending the holding of new elections on 14 March. The December election results were rejected by MAS in Sucre State and by the Social Christian Party, Copei, in Barinas. Copei is claiming the governorship for Gehard Cartay in Barinas.

In remarks to a local Cumana station, Martinez said peace will return to the region only if elections are held again. He also announced a pots-and-pans banging demonstration, despite the fact that the city is under military control.

On 16 February, MAS, Copei, and other political forces rejected the court ruling, while the Democratic Action party supported it.

Political Parties React

PA1702002693 Caracas Venezolana de Television Network in Spanish 1550 GMT 16 Feb 93

[Text] Democratic Action [AD] has expressed satisfaction over the suspension of new elections in the states of Barinas and Sucre. AD has always said that there is no basis for calling new elections. The Social Christian Party, however, has characterized the ruling of the Supreme Court of Justice Political and Administrative Chamber as incoherent and announced it will present an appeal for the annulment of Barinas State electoral certificates—the certificates that moved the Supreme Electoral Council to call for new elections.

While this was happening with AD and the Social Christian Party, the Movement Toward Socialism announced that mass mobilizations will be carried out in Sucre State to support Ramon Martinez because it believes the court's decision is unjust.

The climate of uncertainty has created a tense situation in Sucre and Barinas. The people do not know what procedures will be followed. Interior Minister Jesus Ramon Carmona has explained the legal procedures involved.

[Begin recording] [Carmona] The court ruling has been announced. But some of its consequences will not become effective for a few days because some of the conditions of the ruling must be met first. For example: In order for the persons who were governors on 6 December 1992 to resume their post, the court ruling must first be published by the official gazette of Venezuela. Right now, and until this is done, Sucre State does not have a governor. Once the local Legislative Assembly established that this vacancy existed, it resorted to the Constitution of that state to resolve the situation through the government secretary general. There will be no power vacuum. There is no possibility of a state functioning without the president of a state branch, in this case the executive branch.

[Unidentified Reporter] Is this how the situation in Barinas was resolved?

[Carmona] The situation in Barinas is different. That state's Constitution was implemented without contention from the very beginning. Mechanisms established by the Constitution are being implemented. In line with these mechanisms, the chairman of that state's Legislative Assembly has temporarily assumed the governorship. [end recording]

Perez News Conference Views Elections

PA1702034893 Caracas Venezolana de Television Network in Spanish 0048 GMT 17 Feb 93

[News conference by President Carlos Andres Perez with unidentified reporters on 16 February; place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Perez] A country is not built with violence, but with respect, especially for its basic institutions. The court is the supreme tribunal and all Venezuelans must accept the court's decisions despite any reasons or interests that may prompt disagreement.

[Reporter] Mr. President, do you think there will be presidential elections, as the regional elections have not yet been defined?

[Perez] No, no, no. These are the negative issues that I always reject. In Venezuela we have no reason to be pessimistic. These are accidents or incidents that all democracies experience. The elections will be held, however, and they will be strong. The incidents during the 6 December elections in Barinas and Cumana were regrettable.

[Reporter] With things as they are, there are no guarantees, Mr. President.

[Perez] The political parties are responsible for that. They should have added a little more warmth and good sense to the election process to avoid the current situation. I believe, however, the court's decision and the decisions of the Supreme Electoral Council will resolve these crises quickly. These incidents should not arouse catastrophic feelings in us. All countries face situations like these. Venezuela has proven its courage and ability to defend its democracy and to promote its progress in the midst of all the vicissitudes we have encountered.

[Reporter] Mr. President, do you believe the Supreme Court of Justice decision was untimely as the people were expecting [words indistinct]?

[Perez] I do not believe that a decision, that the restoration of law—which is what the court does—can be viewed as untimely. I believe a decision is always timely because it provides justice. Of course, this process has come at a time when there have been a number of incidents I wish had not taken place, but we must have confidence in our institutions. That is all.

[Reporter] Mr. President, what is your opinion of the OAS report that indicates Venezuela has become a (?money laundering) paradise?

[Venezuela] That is an issue we must study. The Venezuelan Government has been studying this situation and we signed an agreement with the U.S. Federal Reserve to control money laundering. We are collecting all the information we need to take the necessary steps to correct this situation if its exists.

[Reporter] Mr. President, regarding the Venezuelan Institute of Social Security, the Venezuelan Federation of Associations and Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Fedecamaras, is withdrawing from the reorganization board.

[Perez] This is one of those issues that cannot even be discussed. The people who are most interested in maintaining the de jure state are businessmen. They are the ones the de jure state protects the most. To say that they are refusing to accept a law—not an administrative decision—is negative for individuals who must base all their plans and work on the fulfillment of the law. These are temporary issues, however. On 17 February we will hold an economic cabinet and we will discuss this with Fedecamaras, the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers, and the social security reorganization board.

[Reporter] What is the truth about the (?250 million bolivares)?

[Perez] We need not talk about that any more. These are the unfounded scandals. I have said this before. Either there are secret expenses or there are not. If they are not secret, they must be eliminated. If they are secret, there is no way to ask what they were spent on. The interior minister, who by law is responsible for the management of those funds, said he administered those funds. Therefore, there is no problem whatsoever. Unfortunately...

[Reporter, interrupting] There was a signature [words indistinct]

[Perez] That does not matter; none of that matters. Those are incidents that have no significance whatsoever in view of the specific facts stated by the interior minister.

[Reporter] There was a signature by the presidency minister.

[Perez] No sir, that is not true. There is a voucher or note but it was annulled and has no value or significance. However, these are not issues that I have to examine or discuss. I have told you the truth and I believe we should forget that issue.

[Reporter] Will force be used if the disorders continue in Cumana and Barinas?

[Perez] The disorders will not continue. It is the responsibility of the party leaders to prevent this from happening. That is why the state has made a decision. My government, at any rate, will not allow Venezuela to get caught up in an uproar. This is the truth.

By the way, I have good news. You never ask for that. The OPEC meeting ended today in a satisfactory manner. The organization's production was reduced to 23,580,000 barrels daily. In other words, it was decreased by the 1 million barrels daily Venezuela proposed, and Venezuela's quota remained on terms that are in keeping with our production capability.